

Groton Daily Independent

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Community Calendar

Friday, Aug. 28

Senior Menu: Ham and cheese sandwich, potato salad, fresh celery, fruit.

Football hosts Beresford, 7 p.m.

Saturday, Aug. 29

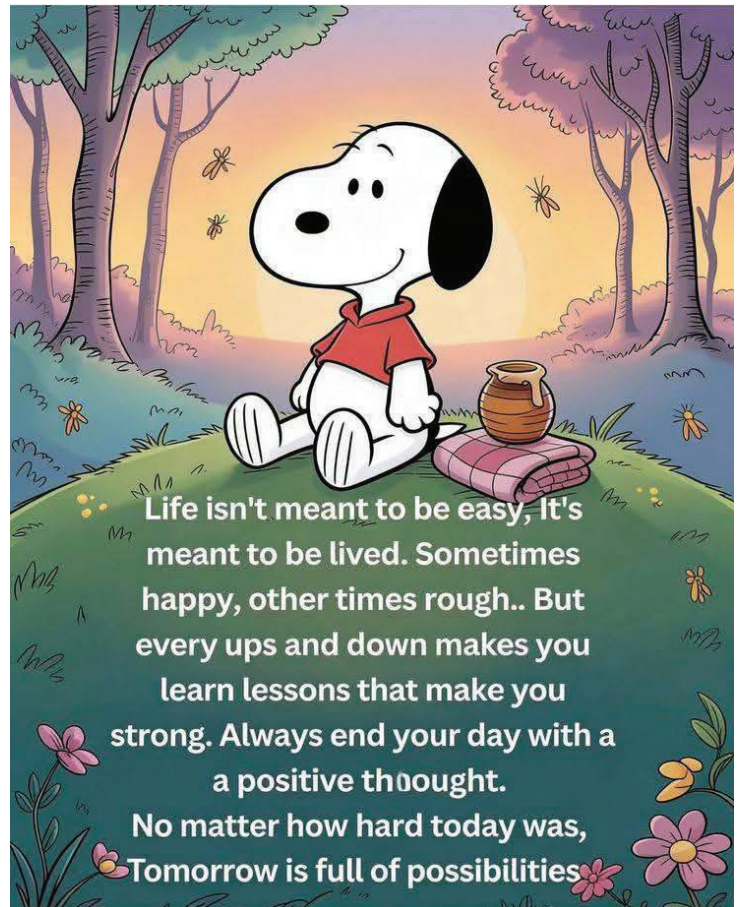
Volleyball: C Match at Matchbox, Aberdeen, 9 a.m.

Volleyball: at Huron Arena (vs. Brandon Valley at 10 a.m.; vs. Brookings at noon; vs. Huron at 1 p.m., vs. Sturgis, 4 p.m.)

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PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445

Paul's Cell/Text: 605-397-7460



Life isn't meant to be easy, it's meant to be lived. Sometimes happy, other times rough.. But every ups and down makes you learn lessons that make you strong. Always end your day with a positive thought.
No matter how hard today was, Tomorrow is full of possibilities

Boys Soccer hosts Dakota Valley, 1 p.m.
Airport Fly-In/Drive In at Groton Airport

Sunday, Aug. 30

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Worship at St. John's, 9 a.m., at Zion, 11 a.m.

United Methodist: Worship at Conde, 8:15 a.m.; at Groton, 9:30 a.m.; at Britton, 11:15 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 10:30 a.m.

Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m.; SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.

First Presbyterian Church: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.; Worship, 11 a.m.

Groton CM&A: Sunday School, 9:15 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m.

Airport Fly-In/Drive In at Groton Airport

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1440

Why 1440? The printing press was invented around the year 1440, spreading knowledge to the masses and changing the course of history. More facts: In every day, there are 1,440 minutes. We're here to make each one count.

Jury Weighs Clancy

Jury deliberation began yesterday in the first-degree murder case against Lindsay Clancy, who killed her three young children before attempting to kill herself. The televised trial has drawn national attention to postpartum mental healthcare and how courts assess criminal responsibility.

Clancy, 36, admits to the January 2023 killings but says she suffered from bipolar disorder and postpartum psychosis, both of which she was diagnosed with after their deaths. Prosecutors characterize Clancy's actions as premeditated, pointing to findings that she did not take all her prescribed medications for postpartum depression and anxiety. The trial has captivated Americans, with conspiracy theories circulating online, hundreds of Clancy supporters wearing pink outside the courthouse, and a smaller group wearing white in remembrance of the three children.

Clancy faces life in prison without parole if convicted. If found not criminally responsible, a judge may decide whether she can be released or must remain in a mental health facility.

'Butcher of Bosnia' Dies

Ratko Mladic, the Bosnian Serb general convicted of genocide for orchestrating the 1995 Srebrenica massacre, died yesterday in UN custody at age 84.

Known as the "Butcher of Bosnia," Mladic was one of the most notorious figures of the 1992-95 Bosnian war, which killed roughly 100,000 people. He commanded Bosnian Serb forces that besieged Sarajevo and, in July 1995, overran Srebrenica, a UN-designated safe area. A hard-line nationalist who portrayed the conflict as a historic struggle against Ottoman rule, Mladic celebrated the capture on camera. His troops then removed women and children and killed about 8,000 Bosniak Muslim men and boys in Europe's worst massacre since World War II. A UN tribunal convicted Mladic in 2017 of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes and sentenced him to life. He evaded capture for 16 years before his 2011 arrest in a Serbian village.

 **Humankind:** A college football player pulls three teens out of a crashed car, saving the driver seconds before the vehicle bursts into flames.

Spanish Museum Heist

A group of men raided the so-called Treasure of Villena from a museum in eastern Spain yesterday. The four-minute heist deprives Europe of its most extensive prehistoric treasure, a roughly 3,000-year-old collection valued at over \$2M.

The robbery took place between 5:20 am and 5:24 am local time, with thieves luring police to a sports center at the town's outskirts minutes before the raid. In that time, they took all but seven of the collection's 66 artifacts—bracelets, bowls, bottles, and other pieces made of gold, silver, mixed metals, and amber. The robbery is the latest in a series of museum heists culminating in a Europol warning last week.

Villena's Bronze Age collection was discovered in 1963, when archaeologist José María Soler found the pieces in the town's dry riverbed. While the inclusion of two iron pieces stumped researchers for decades, a 2023 study found the metals originated from a meteor.

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Yayoi Kusama, a Japanese pop artist known for her polka-dot designs, dies at age 97.

Voice actor Peter Cullen dies at age 85; the Canadian star voiced Optimus Prime in "Transformers" and Eeyore in several "Winnie the Pooh" projects.

UEFA is reportedly preparing a criminal complaint against FIFA president Gianni Infantino for alleged financial mismanagement

over his dead \$20B plan to sell stake in the World Cup.

Science & Technology

Largest-ever map of gene mutations linked to autism reveals hundreds of previously unknown protein interactions that impact brain development.

Engineers create reconfigurable electronic devices that keep working as they change shape, with potential applications in robotics, disaster response, and more (More, w/image)

Electrically charged raindrops found to corrode metal surfaces treated with Teflon, like that of the Eiffel Tower, helping explain why the iconic structure needs frequent repainting.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close higher (S&P 500 +0.7%, Dow +0.2%, Nasdaq +1.6%) as tech stocks rally.

CrowdStrike shares close up 20% in their best day ever after the cybersecurity firm beat Wall Street's expectations.

South Korean chipmaker SK Hynix breaks ground on more than \$4B advanced memory-chip packaging and research hub in Indiana—its first US facility.

House Oversight Committee releases transcript of former Barclays CEO Jes Staley's testimony over his ties to Jeffrey Epstein.

Politics & World Affairs

President Donald Trump signs executive order to change Lake Ontario to "Lake America" amid trade war with Canada.

Nepal flood death toll reaches more than 390 as of this writing, with over 1,400 missing, including tourists from over 30 countries.

Federal aviation officials are reportedly working to fire two air traffic controllers who left work an hour early on the day a jet crashed into a firetruck at LaGuardia Airport; the March 22 collision killed two pilots and injured six other people.

EMPLOYMENT

Wanted full or part time help for harvest. Someone who can drive combine, semi or tractor. Housing available. Near Aberdeen call 605-380-4898. (0819.0909pd).
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Football

Beresford at Groton Area
Friday, Aug. 28, 7 p.m.



Groton
Area
Tigers
Groton, SD

GDILIVE



YouTube

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Groton Daily Independent

For more info: GDILIVE.COM



Football Game sponsors on GDILIVE.COM are: Agtegra, Avantara-Groton, Bierman Farm Service, BK Custom Ts, Blocker Construction, Dacotah Bank, Farmers Union Insurance, Groton Chamber, Groton Ford, Heartland Energy, Jacobson Electric, John Sieh Agency, Jungle Lanes & Cafe, Ken's Food Fair, Locke Electric, Malpert Insurance, Poet, Rix Farms / R&M Farms, S & S Lumber, and The Meat House of Andover.



David Blackmun

Funeral Service

Friday, Aug. 28, 2026

10:30 a.m.

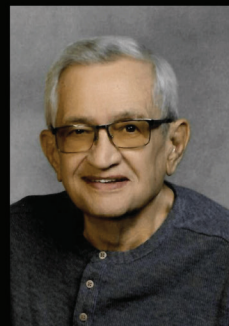
SEAS Church, Groton

on

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Northern State kicks off 2026 in the win column, on the heels of Kraft

THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 42, CSC 17

Records: NSU 1-0, CSC 0-1

Attendance: 5587

HOW IT HAPPENED

The Wolves tallied seven points in the first quarter, 14 in the second, and 21 in the third, while the Eagles notched three in the second and 14 in the fourth

Four of Northern's six touchdowns in the win came off the speedy feet of Hank Kraft who racked up 278 yards of total offense

Kraft put together a show on the ground with touchdown rushes of 2-yards in the first, 41-yards in the second, and a pair of 68-yard and 89-yard runs in the third

Jessie Campbell notched his first touchdown in a Wolves uniform with just under three minutes remaining in the second on a 23-yard pass from Ty Englehart

Cooper Eisenbeisz grabbed the final score of the even for NSU on an 89-yarder off the arm of Englehart in the third; Englehart went down hard on the play but aired it out enough for Eisenbeisz to break into the open field for the touchdown

Jeremy Caruso capped off each of the scores, going a perfect 6-for-6 in PATs

Northern tallied 279 yards rushing, averaging 8.0 yards per carry, and 207 yards passing, averaging 14.8 yards per completion

The offense complete 8-of-16 on third down and 2-of-2 on fourth down

The Wolves defense held the Eagles to two touchdowns, a 40.0% conversion rate on third down, and tallied 3.0 sacks for a loss of 17 yards

Englehart led the air attack with 179 yards passing and two touchdowns, completing 8-of-10 attempts with an 89-yard long

Kraft rushed for a career high 232 yards with four touchdowns, averaging 15.5 yards per carry with an 89-yard long; he also added 46 yards receiving

Eisenbeisz led the receivers with his 89 yards and one touchdown, while adding a combined 58 yards on punt and kick returns

Jake Adams led the defense with eight tackles, followed by Kale Johnson and CJ Gainey with seven apiece

Johnson, Kaydn Turnbow, and Ayden Barnby combined for the team's three sacks in the win, with Barnby notching a team best 3.0 tackles for a loss

Kegan Mountain led the air defense with three pass breakups and four tackles in the win

Caruso averaged 62.0 yards per kick-off, while Isakson averaged 43.8 yards per punt with a 51-yard long

NORTHERN STATE STATISTICAL STANDOUTS

Ty Englehart: 179 yards passing, 8-of-10 completions, 2 touchdowns, 89-yard long

Hank Kraft: 278 yards total offense, 4 touchdowns, 15.5 yards per rush, 89-yard long

Kale Johnson: 7 tackles, 1.0 sack

Ayden Barnby: 5 tackles, 3.0 tackles for a loss, 1.0 sack

Kegan Mountain: 4 tackles, 3 pass breakups

UP NEXT

Northern State returns to Dacotah Bank Stadium next Thursday for the NSIC opener, hosting Winona State. Kickoff is set for 6 p.m. in the Annual Ag Bowl on September 3.

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Shellenberger leads Groton Area at Breathe Easy Meet

MILBANK — Riley Shellenberger posted a top-five finish to lead the Groton Area cross country team Thursday at the Milbank "Breathe Easy" Meet held at Whetstone Creek Golf Course.

Shellenberger finished fifth in the varsity boys 4,000-meter race with a time of 14 minutes, 48.25 seconds. He was less than a second behind Aberdeen Roncalli's Ben Weigel, who placed fourth in 14:44.02, and Great Plains Lutheran's Titus Hofinga, who was sixth in 14:48.98.

Groton Area's Grayden "Grady" Zeck also competed in the varsity race, placing 20th with a time of 16:55.55. Sisseton's Ryder Graff won the varsity boys race in 13:20.99, followed by Milbank's Jeter Scoular in 13:44.07 and Sisseton's Brett Hansen in 14:07.09.

Taylor Fliehs paced Groton Area in the JV girls 3,000-meter race, finishing fifth overall in 13:31.09. She was less than a second behind Milbank's Lennox Spors, who placed fourth in 13:30.17.

Sisseton's McKenna Graff won the JV girls race in 12:26.73, while Milbank's Kingsley Jensen was second in 12:46.49 and Audrey Schmeichel of Milbank was third in 13:02.97.

Groton Area had three runners compete in the JV boys 3,000-meter race.

Tate Johnson led the Tigers with a ninth-place finish in 12:49.48. Calvin Locken was close behind, placing 11th in 12:59.59.

Titan Johnson rounded out Groton Area's JV boys entries, finishing 28th with a time of 19:00.70.

Sisseton's Hudson Bragg won the JV boys race in 11:28.99, edging Milbank's Finn Gilmore, who finished second in 11:29.21. Sisseton's Hardin Stickland was third in 11:35.11.

Groton Area girls top Garretson, boys fall to Freeman/Marion

GARRETSON — The Groton Area girls soccer team used a fast start and a balanced offensive attack to pick up a 4-2 victory over Garretson Thursday.

The Tigers scored twice in the opening seven minutes and built a 3-1 halftime advantage on their way to evening their season record at 3-3.

Brenna Imrie opened the scoring in the third minute after McKenna Tietz created an opportunity down the left side. Tietz cut the ball back and fired a shot on goal that was initially saved, but Imrie knocked home the rebound for a 1-0 lead.

Groton Area struck again just four minutes later.

The Tigers earned a corner kick and Avery Crank delivered a well-placed ball across the face of the goal, where Addison Steffes finished the play to put Groton Area ahead 2-0.

Garretson answered in the 12th minute after taking advantage of a missed assignment in the Groton Area back line, cutting the Tigers' lead to 2-1.

Groton Area regained its two-goal advantage in the 18th minute when Tietz connected on a free kick from approximately 25 yards out, sending the Tigers into halftime with a 3-1 lead.

"Girls started fast scoring two in the opening seven minutes of play," Groton Area coach Matt Baumgartner said. "McKenna Tietz created an abundance of opportunities down the left flank."

Groton Area added its final goal in the 49th minute when Imrie set up Sydney Locke for a score, extending the lead to 4-1.

Garretson scored its second goal eight minutes later on a free kick from about 25 yards, finding the corner of the net to make the final 4-2.

Tori Schuster finished with six saves in goal for Groton Area.

"It was an all-around great performance from the girls, minimizing our errors and capitalizing on theirs," Baumgartner said. "Six games into the season and we sit at 3-3. Some well-earned time off and a full week to prepare for West Central next Saturday sets well with us all."

The Groton Area boys were also on the road Thursday, taking on the Freeman/Marion/Parker/Viborg-Hurley cooperative.

Freeman/Marion/Parker/Viborg-Hurley defeated the Tigers 9-2.

Ryder Schwan and Ethan Kroll each scored a goal for Groton Area.

Brookings County Fatal Crash

What: Four-vehicle fatal crash

Where: Interstate 29 at mile marker 140, 7 miles north of Brookings, South Dakota

When: 5:56 a.m., Thursday, August 27, 2026

Driver 1: 38-year-old female from Toronto, South Dakota, life threatening injuries

Vehicle 1: 2018 Subaru Forester

Seat Belt Used: Under investigation

Driver 2: 19-year-old male from Brookings, South Dakota, fatal injuries

Vehicle 2: 2011 GMC Sierra

Seat Belt Used: Yes

Driver 3: 34-year-old male from Newark, Ohio, No injuries

Vehicle 3: 2024 Ford F-350

Seat Belt Used: Yes

Passenger: 21-year-old male from Clear Lake, Minnesota, no injuries

Seat Belt Used: Yes

Driver 4: 25-year-old male from Brookings, South Dakota, No injuries

Vehicle 4: 2020 Chevrolet Trax

Seat Belt Used: Yes

Brookings County, S.D.- A Brookings man died Thursday in a four-vehicle crash near Brookings, South Dakota.

Names of the those involved have not been released pending notification of family members.

Preliminary crash information indicates the driver of a 2018 Subaru Forester was traveling southbound on Interstate 29 near mile marker 140 in the northbound lanes. At the same time, a 2011 GMC Sierra, 2024 Ford F-350, and 2020 Chevrolet Trax were traveling north in the northbound lanes at the same location. The Subaru struck the GMC causing the Subaru to come to a stop in the roadway. The GMC rotated and struck the Ford. The Chevrolet struck the stopped Subaru, before coming to rest on the shoulder. The driver of the GMC sustained fatal injuries. The driver of the Subaru was life flighted to a Sioux Falls hospital. The occupants of the Ford and the driver of the Chevrolet were not injured.

The investigation is ongoing. All information released is preliminary.

The Highway Patrol is an agency of the South Dakota Department of Public Safety.



Hutterites' agricultural contributions in South Dakota

By Elena Tittel/SD News Watch

SPRING VALLEY COLONY, S.D. – Down a dirt road about 20 miles from Wessington Springs sits Spring Valley Colony. Though it has fewer than 150 people, the colony actively contributes to two major industries: agriculture and manufacturing.

Spring Valley is one of more than 60 colonies in South Dakota, which has the largest Hutterite population in the U.S. And Hutterites make up about 10% of the state's farming population.

Though specific numbers are not available on how much of South Dakota's \$6.2 billion value-added agriculture industry can be attributed to the Hutteries, the colonies do play an instrumental role and fully embrace modern farming technology, unlike the Amish. Hutterites contribute livestock like turkey and beef as well as feed grains and fresh vegetables.

Major poultry producers

George Stahl, who has been Spring Valley Colony's minister for more than 30 years, has lived here his entire life.

"I wouldn't live any other place," he said.

Spring Valley Colony's turkey farm has three turkey barns. Stahl said that each barn houses approximately 15,000 turkeys. Each barn has the turkeys in a different stage. When the turkeys get shipped, they weigh around 50 pounds each, he said.

According to South Dakota Poultry Industries Association, Hutterite colonies are the top producer of turkey in the state of South Dakota, with an average of 5 million turkeys a year.

Data from the South Dakota Governor's Office of Economic Development showed that in 2024, 128.5 million pounds of poultry were produced in the state with a value of \$72.1 million.

Huron is home to Hutterite-owned Dakota Provisions, a meat processing facility. Many Hutterite colonies, including Spring Valley, ship their turkeys to Dakota Provisions. According to Dakota Provisions' website, farming families have invested over \$120 million in cutting-edge turkey production facilities.

The business started in 2004 with 44 independent growers. Now, they produce more than 200 million pounds of product annually, its website states.

Dakota Provisions declined an interview request.

Other livestock contributions include hogs and beef, Stahl said. At Spring Valley, the colony's beef cattle are sold to live auctions in Mitchell, and hogs are sold to packing plants.

Farm-to-table

Farmer-raised products from colonies are not just sold to large companies. They can also be found at local farmers markets.

At the summertime Wessington Springs Farmers Market, George's wife and head seamstress Becky Stahl sell a range of pickled vegetables, from beets to spicy pickles for \$8 a quart. They also sell dairy and meat products, with a "big hit" being fresh turkey wraps with crispy bacon.

Women ages 15 to 45 on the colony take turns picking fruits and vegetables from the garden, George Stahl said.

Becky Stahl said food and meal preparation is taken very seriously at Spring Valley Colony. For example, green string beans are washed and placed in water mixed with salt for four hours before they are cut and canned.

Lots of dedication gets put into meal preparation for colony members as well. Each week, there are 12-15 rotating female cooks who work from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. preparing and serving food to the colony.

Depending on the time of year, dishes range from turkey cutlets and potatoes to beef with fresh veg-

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etables.

Eating practices are similar at other colonies, too.

At Wolf Creek Colony, located about 10 miles outside of Freeman, most of the food for meals comes directly from the colony's grounds. Large quantities of produce such as vegetables are picked directly from the garden, stored and later prepared to serve.

According to one woman who lives on Wolf Creek Colony, there are currently about 500 quarts of green string beans in storage.

Manufacturing industry contributions on the rise

Agriculture is not the only industry Hutterites contribute to. Colonies have begun expanding into the manufacturing business, producing products like steel, foam and prefab.

For example, CR Foam, founded in 2016 and located on Spring Valley Colony, currently serves 11 states: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

With a handful of small foam balls in his hand, Stahl said that the tiny pieces expand like popcorn once they move through a blower system. After three weeks of storage, the foam is shipped for use in various construction purposes such as wall insulation, Stahl said.

The many contributions of Hutterites communities are what make them instrumental to South Dakota's economy.

"They're a very vital part of our community, and they're very diverse," said Mayor of Huron, Mark Robish.

South Dakota News Watch is an independent nonprofit. Read, subscribe for free and donate at sdnewswatch.org. Elena Tittel's internship was funded with support from the Nonprofit Newsroom Internship Program created by The Scripps Howard Fund and the Institute for Nonprofit News. Contact: elena.tittel@sdnewswatch.org.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Sales tax growth, drought and labor shortages shape SD's budget outlook, economic advisers say

BY MAKENZIE HUBER

The South Dakota Governor's Office is entering the state's next budget-writing season with a rosier revenue picture than feared earlier this year, but advisers warned Thursday of uncertainty around federal policy, drought and workforce shortages.

The Governor's Council of Economic Advisers met by video conference to give state financial officials ground-level economic insight as they work to prepare the annual budget that Gov. Larry Rhoden will propose to lawmakers in December. The budget is influenced by economic factors that affect various tax revenues.

Revenue reports and sales tax growth

The state finished last fiscal year with revenue that was \$29.7 million, or 1.08%, above predictions.

State sales tax revenue in July, the first month of fiscal year 2027, was up 12.8% compared to the same period last year.

Marnie Herrmann, of Rapid City and chief banking officer at Security First Bank, said average debit card transactions exceeded \$50 for the first time this summer. Those payments generally reflect gas and grocery purchases, she said.

"That's a little bit of a harbinger, if you will, of price pressures," Herrmann said.

Agriculture and manufacturing

Farm income has rebounded from a difficult stretch based on first-quarter 2026 reports, said Derek Johnson, state economist with the Bureau of Finance and Management.

Beef prices have risen, and grain prices have increased recently, creating some optimism among farmers, Herrmann said.

Other advisers warned that outside factors, especially shifts in federal policy and climate, are creating uncertainty.

Drought is affecting roughly 75% of the state, and extreme heat during corn's pollination stage will impact yields, South Dakota economics professor Evert Van der Sluis warned. Federal farm program payments make up between 25% and 30% of net farm income, he added, and federal budget pressures could put those payments at risk.

"We've seen these federal payments fluctuate quite a bit in response to trade policies, especially," Van der Sluis said.

Tariffs have cut into the agriculture and manufacturing industries. An ongoing dispute with Canada is increasing costs for some manufacturers and limiting sales for others, said Carla Gatzke, a former executive at Daktronics, a Brookings-based manufacturer of scoreboards and other electronic displays. Gatzke said the "swings in tariffs" over the last year discouraged development and capital investment in the Brookings area.

Labor force, housing and childcare

South Dakota's unemployment rate was 2% in July, with roughly three job openings per unemployed person, Johnson said. But labor force participation is declining, and advisers tied that trend to childcare and housing challenges in the state.

People can't work if they can't find someone to care for their children or find a place to live, said Doug Sharp, owner of Sharp Automotive in Watertown.

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Several advisers shared stories of young family members staying home after having children. Sharp said a lack of data on childcare across the state makes it difficult to quantify the shortage or propose solutions.

Efforts to address the childcare shortage in recent years have stalled in the state Capitol, including a bill offering financial assistance to childcare workers that Gov. Larry Rhoden vetoed.

Housing, advisers said, is an easier challenge to address, though the costs remain a significant barrier to new single-family development. The cost of construction, said Karl Adam of the South Dakota Bankers Association, has "gone through the roof."

"We still need single-family homes that are affordable in central South Dakota," Adam said, "but we just don't seem to be able to get that process started. The cost of construction is an impediment."

Multifamily construction is making a "huge comeback" in Sioux Falls after a lag in recent years, city Finance Director Shawn Pritchett said.

Sharp said communities are working to incentivize builders.

"Every city will pull out all the stops to figure out how to build out the market," Sharp said.

Makenzie Huber is a lifelong South Dakotan who regularly reports on the intersection of politics and policy with health, education, social services and Indigenous affairs. Her work with South Dakota Searchlight earned her the title of South Dakota's Outstanding Young Journalist in 2024, and she was a 2024 finalist for the national Livingston Awards.

After primary and runoff, Trump endorses Republican nominee for South Dakota governor

BY SETH TUPPER

After endorsing nobody in the South Dakota Republican Party's four-candidate primary race or top-two runoff, Republican President Donald Trump has endorsed the winner of the state party's nomination for governor.

Trump gave his "Complete and Total Endorsement" to Gov. Larry Rhoden on Thursday in a post on Truth Social, Trump's social media platform.

Rhoden's only opponent in the Nov. 3 general election is the Democratic nominee, former legislator Dan Ahlers, of Dell Rapids.

Rhoden finished second to Aberdeen businessman Toby Doeden in a four-way primary on June 2. Rhoden then appeared with Trump on July 3 at a Mount Rushmore fireworks display, where Rhoden and Trump both delivered speeches. Trump did not endorse Rhoden at that time. Rhoden went on to beat Doeden in the July 28 runoff election.

Rhoden thanked Trump for the endorsement in a press release Thursday, saying "I look forward to continuing to work with you and your administration to keep South Dakota strong, safe, and free!"

Ahlers responded with a statement saying, in part, that he is "happy for Larry" because "I'm sure President Trump's endorsement means a lot to him."

"I'm thankful for every endorsement I've received, but the endorsement that matters most to me is the endorsement of the people of South Dakota," Ahlers said. "They are the people I want to earn the trust of, and they are the people I will represent as governor."

Republican former Gov. Kristi Noem kickstarted the race for governor last year when she resigned to accept a job leading Trump's Department of Homeland Security. Rhoden, who was Noem's lieutenant governor, was elevated to serve as governor for the remainder of her term.

Seth is editor-in-chief of South Dakota Searchlight. He was previously a supervising senior producer for South Dakota Public Broadcasting and a newspaper journalist in Rapid City and Mitchell.

Judge reinstates pause on Trump order limiting mail ballots

BY JACOB FISCHLER

A federal judge froze for two weeks a Trump administration regulation to restrict mail voting late Thursday, calling the U.S. Postal Service rule a violation of states' power to administer elections.

U.S. District Judge Indira Talwani's temporary restraining order reinstated a pause that she had lifted just a day earlier, following a U.S. Supreme Court procedural ruling Monday that allowed the administration to implement the policy. The federal government will likely appeal Thursday night's order.

Throughout months of litigation, Talwani, whom President Barack Obama appointed to the Massachusetts federal court bench in 2013, has shown strong skepticism about President Donald Trump's power to compel states to overhaul their mail voting systems.

She did so again Thursday, saying the government had not produced any evidence of fraudulent mail voting that the rule was intended to fix. The voting rights groups and Democratic states that sued, however, had shown that voters would be disenfranchised in the Nov. 3 midterm elections if the rule remains in place then, she wrote.

"The USPS's interest in correcting an unsubstantiated problem through likely unconstitutional means is dwarfed by the overwhelming risk of pervasive disenfranchisement of citizens who need access to mail ballots in order to vote," Talwani said.

The Supreme Court's conservative majority ruled Monday the two dozen Democratic state officials had sued too early when they challenged Trump's executive order that USPS had not yet codified in a final rule. The ruling did not mention that the Postal Service had actually published a final rule the previous business day, Aug. 21.

The states and voting rights groups promptly refiled lawsuits Wednesday to challenge the final rule, asking Talwani to keep it from taking effect while the case proceeded.

In the interim, the Trump administration forged ahead with the rule's implementation, publishing an FAQ earlier Thursday on various aspects of the rule and arguing in court that it was not seeking to take over election administration.

The rule creates new requirements for mail ballot envelopes, which states say would present a major challenge to complete before this year's elections.

It also requires states to send the federal government lists of voting-age citizens, which would be cross-referenced with federal citizenship data, and forbids the Postal Service from delivering or collecting ballots from people who are not confirmed to be eligible voters through that process.

Trump and administration officials have characterized the rule as a tool for election integrity and Trump has long claimed fraud was rampant in mail voting, without ever providing evidence.

All states allow some form of mail voting. Eight states, primarily in the West, and the District of Columbia, mail ballots to every registered voter.

Jacob covers federal policy and helps direct national coverage as deputy Washington bureau chief for States Newsroom. Based in Oregon, he focuses on Western issues. His coverage areas include climate, energy development, public lands and infrastructure.

Canadian tariffs to further raise prices, a top concern for voters

BY ASHLEY MURRAY

WASHINGTON — A developing trade war with Canada could bite Republicans ahead of the upcoming midterm elections as voters worry about rising prices and industries in states with competitive races could suffer.

Maine's lobster industry dodged what officials had warned could be economic havoc Thursday morning when Canada reversed its decision to tax lobster imports at 25%. But states including Ohio, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Michigan and Wisconsin could see effects if Canada follows through on retaliatory tariffs on alcohol, automobiles, dairy, home appliances, steel and other goods.

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Those products are among the 629 categories Canada's Department of Finance announced Tuesday in response to President Donald Trump's most recent tariffs on Canadian goods that went into effect over the weekend.

"On one hand you have the issue of the U.S. import tariffs, which voters are associating with affordability, but then on the other hand you have the retaliatory Canadian tariffs, which are going to impact businesses in those states," said Alfredo Carrillo Obregon, a trade policy analyst with the libertarian think tank Cato Institute.

"So you could have a sort of double whammy where there's pressure on behalf of voters for the president to recede this policy," he said.

Trade talks have completely stalled between the U.S. and Canada, U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer told Canadian Broadcasting Corporation News on Wednesday evening, a day after Canada announced retaliatory taxes to start Sept. 8 on \$27.6 billion worth of American goods.

The duties on U.S. imports will match Trump's new 50% tariffs on hundreds of Canadian products "dollar-for-dollar," according to Canada's Department of Finance.

Individual businesses and importers, rather than governments, pay the tariffs on goods. Economists warn increased costs on either side of tariffs can affect investment decisions and increase consumer prices.

States Newsroom documented accounts from numerous small business owners affected by Trump's tariff policies during his second term.

Small portion of trade volume

The Yale Budget Lab estimates that under the Trump administration's current tariff schedule, including its latest tariffs on Canadian goods, Americans will spend an additional \$1,100 annually on household costs.

The increase in annual household costs pre- and post-Trump's newest duties on Canadian goods, which took effect Aug. 22, ranges roughly between \$27 and \$33, according to the Yale Budget Lab's comparison.

Of the massive and intertwined trade relationship between the U.S. and Canada, the new tariffs account for a small fraction of all goods traded. Canada is the U.S.'s second-largest trading partner, and the two countries exchanged \$879.9 billion in goods in 2025, according to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.

Major areas of trade between the two countries that are subjected to tariffs include automobiles, industrial supplies, steel, iron and aluminum.

"It's not a huge magnitude. Both the Canadian and the American tariffs cover only about 5% of what each country exports to each other. We're not talking about all of a sudden everything we get from Canada is going to get tariffs. It's only a share of that. But this is the initial salvo," Obregon said.

"If you are a company that relies on imports from Canada, and you're sort of doing production on both sides of the border in that sense, then you are worried about where this could lead in the future," he added.

Outsized politics

While tariffs are small in proportion to Canada and the U.S.'s entire trade portfolio, the politics are outsized.

Republican Sen. Susan Collins of Maine, who faces a tough race to keep her seat, told local reporters Wednesday she spoke with the Trump administration about protecting her state's major lobster and seafood industry, which was spared Thursday.

Collins' opponent, Democrat Troy Jackson, attacked the incumbent on social media Wednesday, blaming her for having "completely failed" to stop Trump's tariffs.

The Republican candidate for Michigan's open Senate seat, former U.S. Rep. Mike Rogers, has not commented on the new tariffs, but Democrats in Michigan are seizing the issue.

Michigan Democratic Party Chair Curtis Hertel told the Michigan Advance the tariffs will "throw Michigan's economy into chaos."

Rogers' opponent, Abdul El-Sayed, on Tuesday responded to Trump's threat on Truth Social to rename Lake Ontario to Lake America.

"Whatever you call it, you just made all the goods we buy that come across our border more expensive," El-Sayed wrote on X. "Michigan, he's asking us to pay for his vanity trade war with our money."

Trump signed an executive order Thursday renaming Lake Ontario to Lake America.

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During comments to reporters, Trump said Canada "has been ripping us off a long time on trade, very sadly, even the military. You know, we defend Canada for nothing."

He added: "They don't pay for anything, and they want to be treated like a state, but they're not a state."

Imran Bayoumi, an expert on U.S.-Canada relations with the Atlantic Council, said Canadians are "angry, hurt and upset" about Trump's rhetoric toward their country's sovereignty.

The country, which has long received scrutiny over its defense spending, has increased the allocation in recent years, said Bayoumi, a Canadian-American.

"There's a recognition that you can't change your geography, and so the two are going to need to find a way to work together ... on shared defense challenges, economic priorities, the Arctic, the defense of North America," Bayoumi said.

"The challenge now is to either find a narrow way off this path that both sides are on, which seems to be spiraling downwards, or ensure the deterioration of relations in the economic and trade sector doesn't spill into other areas."

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney enjoys approval from 76% of Canadians for his decision over the weekend to walk away from trade talks with the U.S., according to the Canadian Angus Reid Institute. But the poll found two in five Canadians also fear for their job security.

Carney has already pledged a \$7.5 billion package for businesses and workers who might be affected by the tariffs.

Trump administration officials remain dug in on the tariffs and denied any major effects of the Canadian retaliatory tariffs.

"The concept that this could have any kind of meaningful effect on the United States is quite limited," Greer told Fox News' Laura Ingraham Wednesday.

"And guess what? If there's something in there that has some negative effect that is brought to the attention of President Trump, he can do what he needs to do," he added. "I mean, this is just not going to lead to any economic Armageddon."

Jennifer Shutt contributed to this story.

Ashley Murray covers the nation's capital as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include domestic policy and appropriations.

Postal Service pushes ahead on Trump order limiting vote-by-mail

BY ARIANA FIGUEROA

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Postal Service took another step Thursday in implementing a Trump administration policy to restrict mail-in voting, even as a high-stakes legal battle plays out and midterm elections approach.

The agency published an FAQ about its new rule that compels states to send their voter rolls to the federal government and only deliver mail ballots to voters who match federal citizenship data. The rule also updates standards for mail ballots that states have said would be difficult to implement before the Nov. 3 elections that will determine the balance of Congress.

The controversial rule, which two dozen Democratic states and voting rights groups are challenging in federal court, increases the federal government's role in elections and voting.

The states have argued the rule violates the U.S. Constitution, which grants them the power of administering elections.

In a Thursday brief defending the rule, the U.S. Justice Department said it only contained "modest improvements and modernizations of the Postal Service's infrastructure" and would have minimal effect on states' election administration.

"The Rule does not displace a single State election law," the brief said. "And it need not and should not prevent a single voter from voting by mail."

Democrat-led states and voting rights groups re-filed lawsuits Wednesday to block the Trump administration from executing the rule after a Supreme Court ruling Monday that temporarily greenlit the policy.

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on procedural grounds.

USPS acknowledged pending litigation in the FAQ, and noted it would make any changes spurred by the suits.

Republicans, including Trump, have long made the accusation that noncitizens vote in federal elections, which multiple studies have shown occurs rarely.

On Thursday, Trump said he believed states could implement the new rule, even in North Carolina where ballots are set to be mailed next week.

"North Carolina is great," Trump said. "And they do some mail-in ballots. But basically they ruled on the legitimacy and the way we want to make them legitimate. And it was a great ruling for the Republicans."

Those states suing to block the rule are California, Massachusetts, Nevada, Washington, Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, as well as the District of Columbia.

Jennifer Shutt contributed to this story.

Ariana covers the nation's capital for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include immigration, congressional policy and legal challenges with a focus on how those policies impact the lives of immigrants and migrants coming to the U.S.

Some states raise pay for home caregivers as shortage looms

BY ANNE SAKER

WILMINGTON, Ohio — From her recliner in her tidy townhouse, Donna Logan offers advice to the first baby boomers to hit the big '8-0' this year: Life can be good, especially with someone like Helen Aponte helping with laundry and housekeeping and the drive to the doctor's office.

"I do most things on my own," said Logan, 81, a native of Wilmington, Ohio. "But having Helen come in once a week gives me confidence."

"I drive her, whatever she needs," said Aponte, 52. "It makes me happy to help Donna stay in her home."

Logan and Aponte found each other about a year ago through the Council on Aging in Southwest Ohio in rural Clinton County, about 40 miles northeast of Cincinnati. For three hours on Mondays, Aponte works directly for Logan as a home care aide for \$15 an hour, paid by a county property tax for senior services.

Aponte helps Logan with the tasks of daily living, not with medical care. For a senior, that support can mean the difference between aging at home or in an institution charging thousands of dollars a day.

Many seniors who are relatively healthy but need some assistance could see that relationship as an ideal arrangement. But it won't be possible for many baby boomers, the 65 million Americans who were born between 1946 and 1964.

This year, four million Americans in that generation, including Cher, Sylvester Stallone and President Donald Trump, turned 80. Every day for at least the next decade, another 10,000 will join them. By 2030, Americans over 65 will outnumber those under 18.

For decades, experts have warned that the country was not prepared for this demographic wave.

In 2002, a National Institutes of Health forecast urged states, among other things, to revamp policies to prioritize home caregiving over nursing homes. The study warned that it was "becoming increasingly difficult for home care agencies and other providers to find and retain qualified caregivers," and that the problem would only get worse as the U.S. population aged.

A big factor then was the poor pay for home care workers. The future has arrived, and little has changed.

Despite the importance of their work, home caregivers are near the bottom of the nation's pay scale: In 2024, the national median pay for home care aides was \$16.78 an hour, or \$34,900 per year, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The low pay and the difficulty of the work have created a labor shortage, worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic and the Trump administration's immigration crackdown. There are 4.3 million home care aides today, but the federal government forecasts that by 2034, the nation will need more than 5 million of them.

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Some states that cover nonmedical home care through Medicaid, the joint state-federal healthcare program for people with low incomes, have marginally increased workers' wages. But those small gains could be wiped out in 2027, when billions of dollars in Medicaid cuts go into effect as part of the broad tax and spending measure that President Donald Trump signed last year.

The spending cuts in that law will put pressure on cash-strapped states to cut home- and community-based services, since the federal Medicaid law only requires them to provide institutional care.

The challenge in Ohio

The structural challenges of a larger older population fall mostly to the states, and Ohio is a bellwether. The population has been aging faster since the 1990s collapse of the state's industrial base, "so I understood the challenge when I came into office," said Ursel McElroy.

In 2019, McElroy, a state government veteran on aging policy, became director of the Ohio Department of Aging under Republican Gov. Mike DeWine. In an interview, McElroy defined the challenge, then and now.

"Our health care is a triumph of human ingenuity, but while we're living longer, we're spending more years in less than good health," he said. "That's the problem we want to solve for. How do we keep pace with the realities of aging?"

One reality is that many seniors, such as Donna Logan, cannot afford to hire an aide on their own, but they are not eligible for Medicaid coverage. Instead, they turn to the nation's more than 600 area agencies on aging, a network established in the 1965 Older Americans Act.

The Council on Aging of Southwestern Ohio manages senior-services levies in four counties including Clinton, said spokesperson Paula Smith. From that money, the county's Elderly Services Program can pay home care aides, who can be hired through an employment service or directly.

In 2021, the Biden administration proposed putting \$400 billion into Medicaid's home-based and community programs to support home care workers and improve their pay as they kept older Americans out of nursing homes where COVID-19 was rampant and deadly. The proposal did not pass. The shortage of home care aides worsened.

In the past two years, some states have raised the pay of those workers in their Medicaid programs, often to bring them closer to the state's minimum wage.

In California, for example, the basic wage for home care workers rose this year to \$16.90 an hour, which is the statewide minimum wage. Each of the state's 58 counties then adds a location adjustment. The Los Angeles County wage went up more than \$1 to \$19.64 this year.

In New York, the hourly wage for home care aides rose by 55 cents, to \$19.65 in New York City, Long Island and Westchester County and to \$18.65 in the rest of the state. Other states that have recently adjusted home care aide wages include Illinois, up a dollar to \$18.75 and Texas, from \$10.60 to \$13.

Ohio, where the minimum wage is \$11, also raised its pay in 2025 to an average of \$16 an hour because, McElroy said, the Department of Aging and advocates across the state "have come together more so than I've seen in years past."

The nonprofit Councils on Aging across Ohio held roundtable discussions for legislators on the critical shortage of home care aides, and the importance of their work. Raises for the Medicaid-paid workforce of home care aides, advocates said, would help bring up wages for everyone doing that work. A social media campaign pushed for pay raises, and ultimately, the legislature approved them.

Smith, the spokesperson for the Council on Aging of Southwestern Ohio, said more people are applying to become home care aides. While Smith said no one is quite sure why, the pay raises likely helped.

'I am doing just fine here'

Donna Logan says baby boomers shouldn't worry about turning 80. "They're in a lot better shape, I think, than our parents," she said one rainy summer morning in her Wilmington townhouse. "I know a lot of them want to stay at home, like me. I tell them, 'Get Helen.'"

The handicapped tag on the rearview mirror of Aponte's sedan allows her to ferry Logan to the grocery store or the doctor's office. She helps Logan with housekeeping. Every week, Aponte shows Logan how to sign on to the computer to sign her time card for \$15 an hour. "I'm getting the hang of it," Logan said

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with a laugh.

She turned down her son's offer to live with his family. With Aponte, "I am doing just fine here."

Logan isn't the only one. Aponte has 14 other clients, and they love her so much that in May, Aponte received a Council on Aging award as a home aide hero.

"I love doing this so much," Aponte said. As a teenager, she took care of her grandmother and discovered a calling. She said her work now gives her flexibility to care for a disabled son.

In her years as a home care aide, Aponte has found one thing in common among seniors, no matter the generation.

"They have a lot of stories," she said, "and they just want someone to listen to them."

This story was originally produced by Stateline, which is part of States Newsroom, a nonprofit news network which includes South Dakota Searchlight, and is supported by grants and a coalition of donors as a 501c(3) public charity.

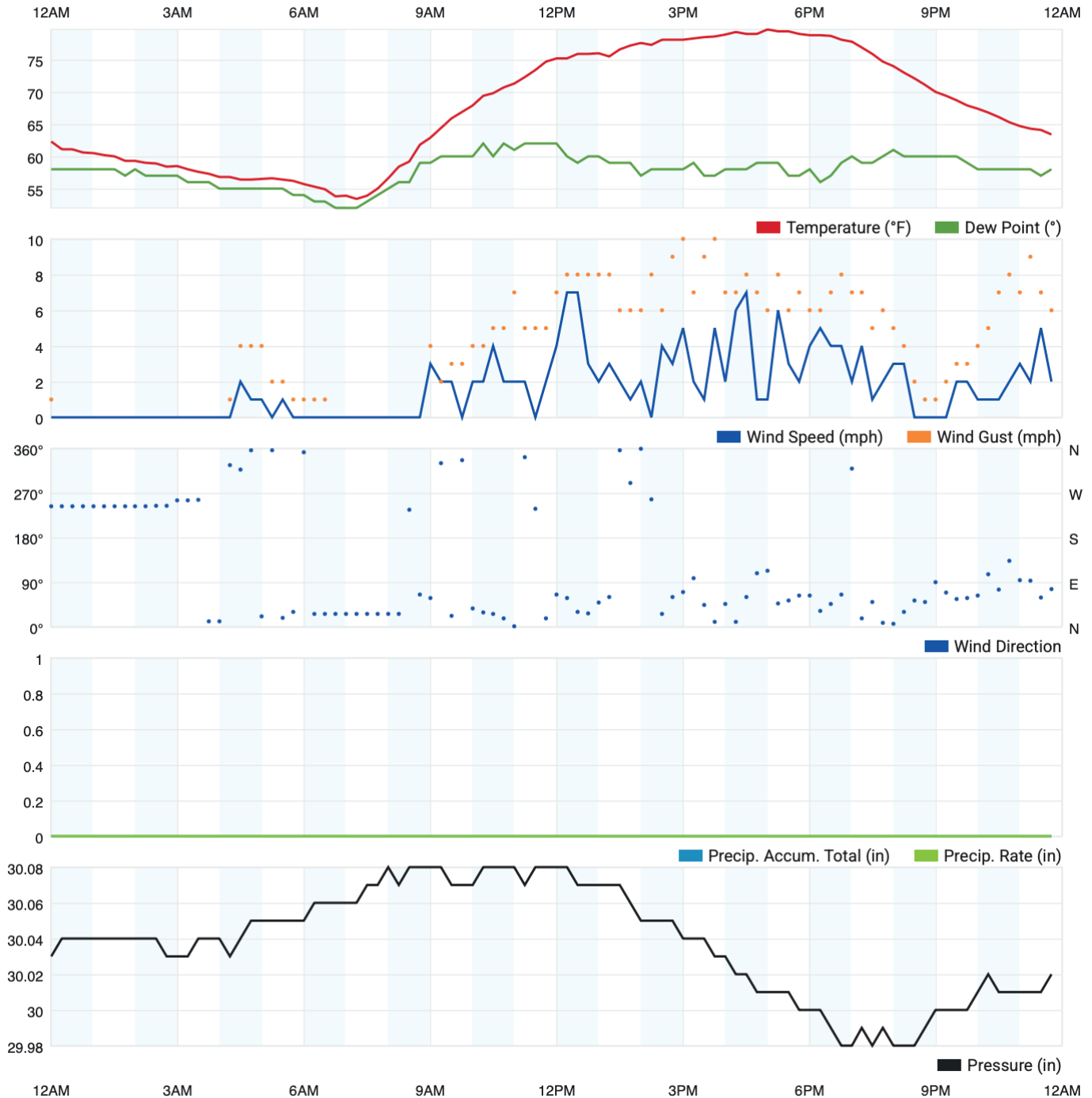
Anne Saker is a Stateline correspondent based in Cincinnati. She spent 40 years as a daily journalist for news organizations from coast to coast, including the News & Observer in Raleigh, North Carolina, and The Oregonian in Portland. At the Cincinnati Enquirer, she was on the team that earned the 2018 Pulitzer Prize in local reporting. In 2023, the Greater Cincinnati chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists inducted Saker into its Hall of Fame. Her writing has appeared in the New York Times, USA Today and Sky & Telescope. She also is a potter and teaches classes. She is a graduate of Ohio University and lives in Cincinnati.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

August 27, 2026



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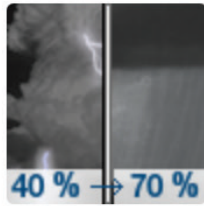
Today



High: 84 °F

Partly Sunny

Tonight



Low: 64 °F

Chance
T-storms then
Showers
Likely

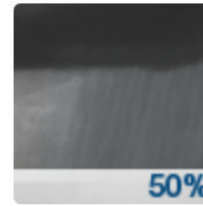
Saturday



High: 85 °F

Partly Sunny

Saturday Night



Low: 63 °F

Chance
Showers

Sunday



High: 86 °F

Mostly Sunny

HIGHEST LOCAL RISK

1

WHAT THIS MEANS:

Isolated Severe Storms Possible

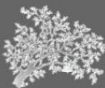
Timing (CDT)

Central/North Central SD:
Developing around 6-9 pm
progressing east through the
evening/overnight

PRIMARY THREATS



Quarter Sized
Hail



Winds
60 mph

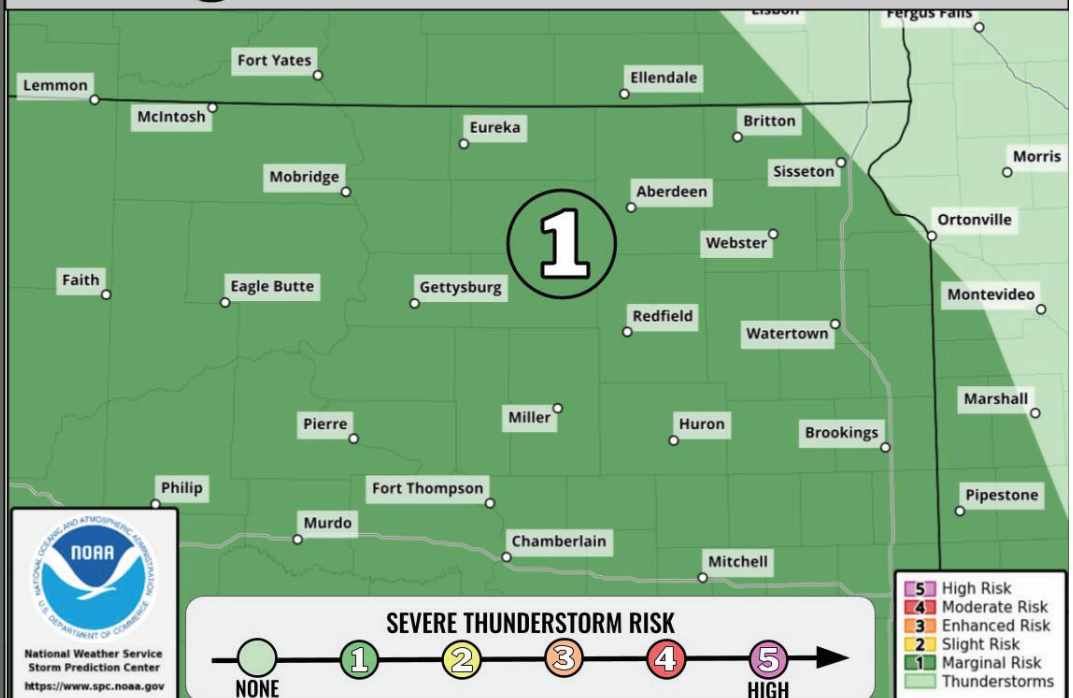


Brief Heavy
Rainfall

NWS
Aberdeen, SD



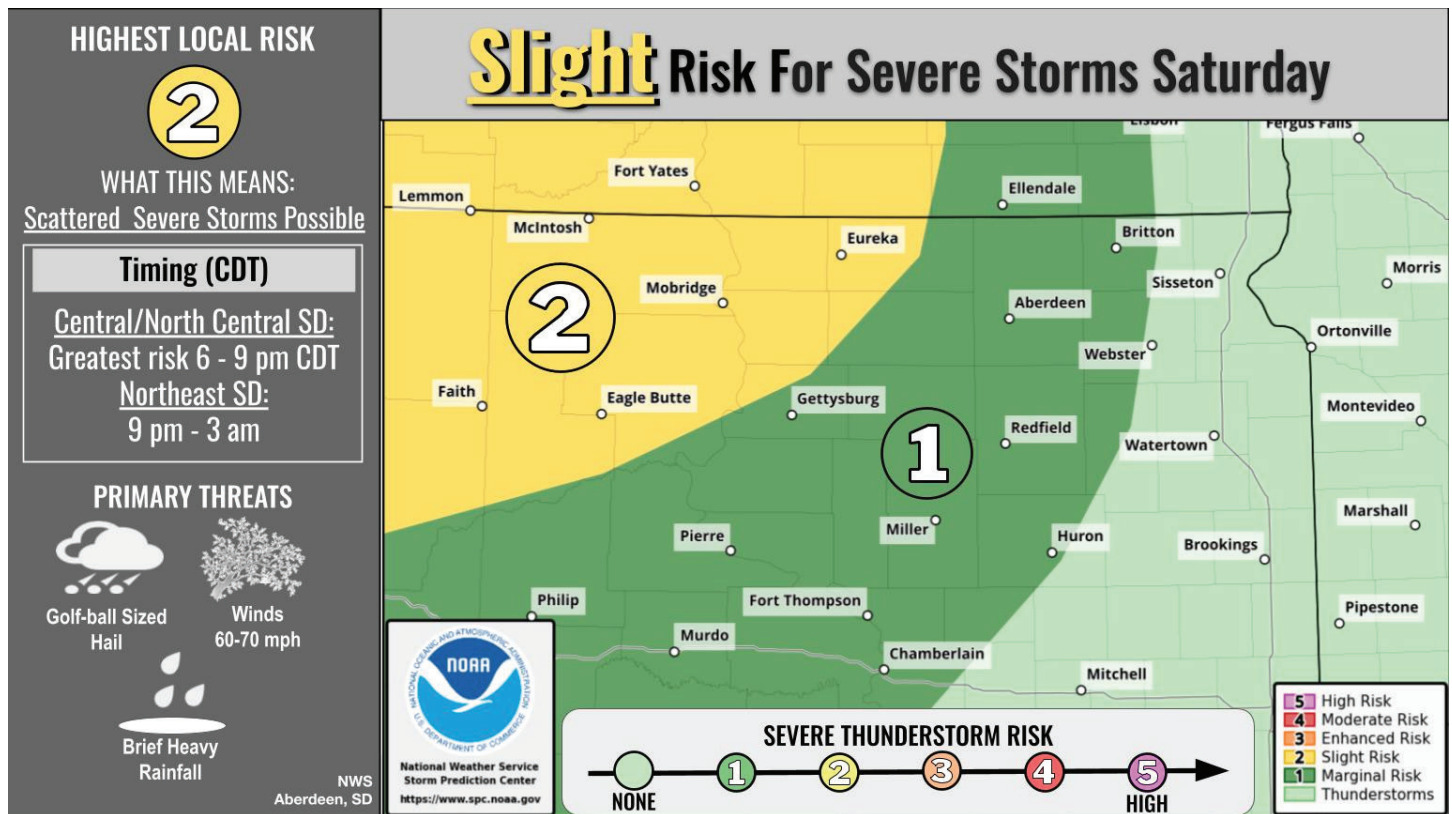
Marginal Risk For Severe Storms Friday



There is a marginal risk (1 of 5) for severe storms. Storms will develop in central and north central South Dakota late in the afternoon and early evening, around 6 to 9 pm. They will progress east through the evening and overnight hours, departing the northeast during the early morning. Main threats are hail to the size of Quarters and wind gusts up around 60 mph.

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The focus for the next round of storms Saturday is mainly across north central South Dakota late in the afternoon and early evening, around 6 to 9 pm. They will progress east through the evening and overnight hours, weakening during the early morning. Main threats are hail to the size of Golf-balls and wind gusts of 60 to 70 mph.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 80 °F at 5:04 PM

Low Temp: 53 °F at 7:20 AM

Wind: 11 mph at 2:56 PM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 104 in 1937

Record Low: 31 in 1893

Average High: 81

Average Low: 54

Average Precip in Aug.: 2.03

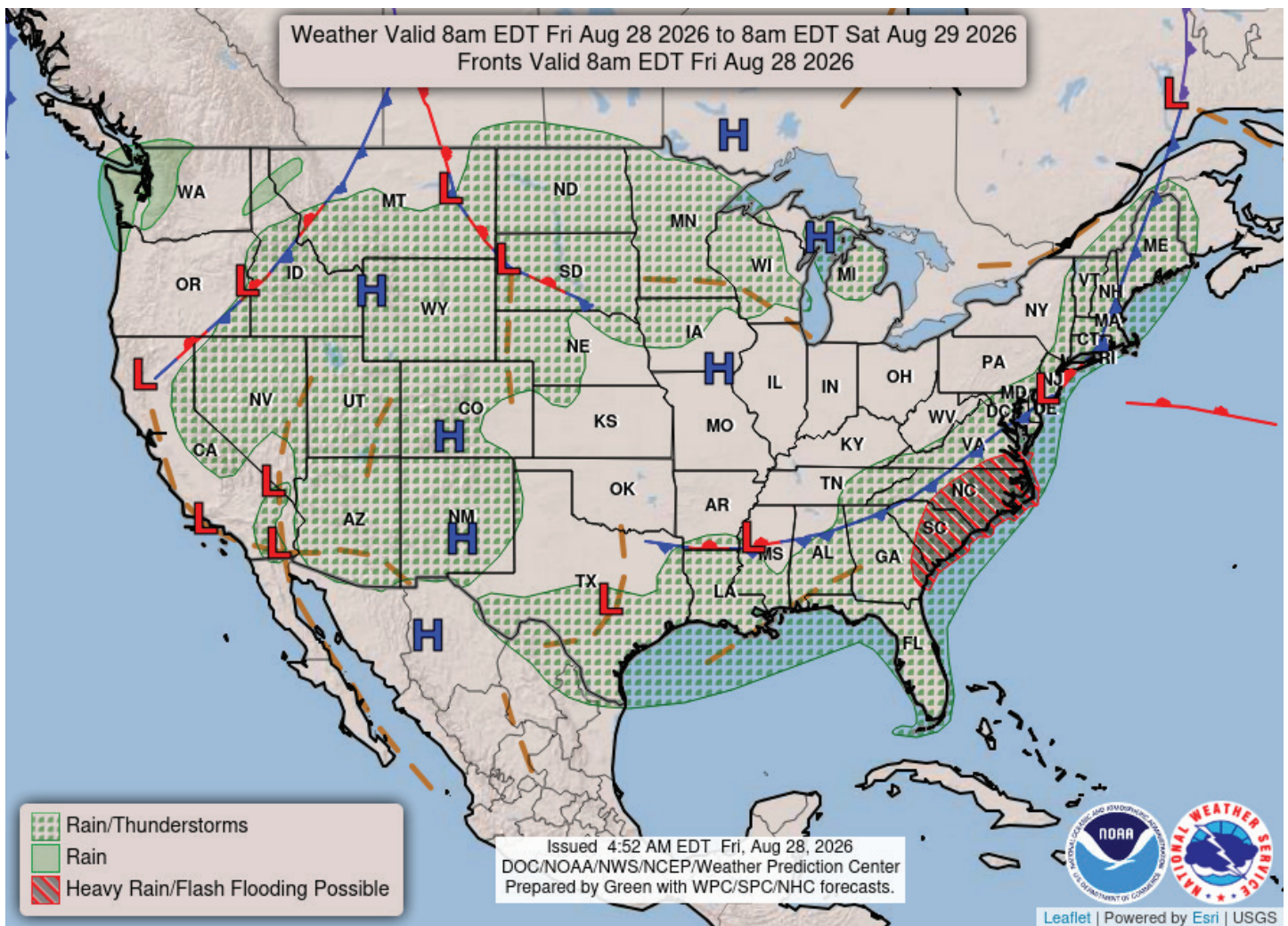
Precip to date in Aug.: 10.52

Average Precip to date: 16.13

Precip Year to Date: 19.99

Sunset Tonight: 8:20 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:49 am



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Today in Weather History

August 28, 2011: Several thunderstorms tracking southeast across the region brought large hail along with damaging winds to parts of the area. Golf ball hail broke some windows on several homes and the church in Herried in Campbell County. Colossal hail up to three inches in diameter caused some vehicle and siding damage in Tolstoy, in Potter County. In Redfield, seventy mph winds downed a tree along with many large tree branches. Also, the metal on a roof was peeled back.

1990: Between 3:15 p.m. and 3:45 p.m. a devastating F5 tornado ripped a 16.4 mile-long path through portions of Kendall and Will counties in northern Illinois. A total of 29 people were killed, and 350 more were injured. An estimated \$160 million in damages occurred. The tornado's path width ranged from 200 yards to half a mile. A total of 470 homes were destroyed, and another 1000 homes were damaged. Sixty-five thousand customers lost power.

1898 — Torrents of rain accompanied by a furious wind upset the rain gage at Fort Mohave AZ. However, water in a wash tub set out on the mesa, clear of everything, measured eight inches after the 45 minute storm. (The Weather Channel)

1911 — Saint George, GA, was deluged with 18.00 inches of rain in 24 hours to establish a state record. (The Weather Channel)

1959 — Lieutenant Colonel William Rankin bailed out of his plane at a height of 46,000 feet into a violent thunderstorm, and lived to write about the 45 minute journey (which normally would have been a thirteen minute descent). He described it as one of the most bizarre and painful experiences imaginable. (The Weather Channel)

1971 — Heavy rains from Tropical Storm Doria caused devastating floods in central and northeast New Jersey resulting in 138 million dollars damage. In southeastern Pennsylvania, high winds downed trees and power lines, and in New York City, heavy rains flooded streets and subways. (David Ludlum)

1973 — An F4 tornado touched down near Canaan, New York, and moved to western Massachusetts. Three people were killed in West Stockbridge, Massachusetts when a truck stop was destroyed, and another person died in a ruined house nearby.

1986 — The temperature at Apalachicola, FL, dipped to 62 degrees to shatter their previous August record by four degrees, having tied their August record high of 99 degrees on the 2nd of the month. (The Weather Channel)

1987 — Severe thunderstorms broke the heat in the southeastern U.S. and the Gulf Coast Region, but not before seven cities reported record high temperatures for the date. The severe thunderstorms produced wind gusts to 80 mph downing large trees around Horse Shoe NC, and pelted southeastern Meridian MS with hail two inches in diameter. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 — Tropical Storm Chris spawned a tornado near Manning, SC, which killed one person, and spawned three tornadoes in North Carolina. Chris produced one to two foot tides, and three to six inch rains, over coastal South Carolina. Severe thunderstorms in New York State and Vermont, developing ahead of a cold front, spawned a tornado which killed one person at Hector NY, produced tennis ball size hail at Brandon VT, and produced wind gusts to 80 mph at Lyndonville VT. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 — Early morning thunderstorms in Nebraska produced 4.50 inches of rain around McCook, and 4.65 inches near Auburn and Brownville. Showers in Montana pushed the rainfall total for the month at Havre past the previous August record of 3.90 inches. (The National Weather Summary)

1990 — Between 3:15 p.m. and 3:45 p.m. a devastating F5 tornado ripped a 16.4 mile-long path through portions of Kendall and Will counties in northern Illinois. A total of 29 people were killed, and 350 more were injured. An estimated \$160 million in damages occurred. The tornado's path width ranged from 200 yards to half a mile. A total of 470 homes were destroyed, and another 1000 homes were damaged. Sixty-five thousand customers lost power.

2005 — Hurricane Katrina attained Category 5 status on the morning of August 28 and reached its peak strength at 1800 UTC that day, with maximum sustained winds of 175 mph and a minimum central pressure of 902 mbars (26.6 inHg).



Celebrating Spiritual Growth

Spiritual growth isn't about achieving perfection—it's about genuine transformation.

2 Peter 3:17-18: 17 You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness,

18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

Do you ever wonder if you're actually growing spiritually or just going through the motions? It's a fair question. Many of us show up to church, pray, and read our Bible—but genuine transformation can be harder to measure.

Thankfully, spiritual growth isn't mysterious. God is at work in us, and the following are evidence of His transforming power:

Growing hunger for Christ. When we taste what life with Jesus is like, we want more. He calls Himself the bread of life (John 6:35), and the more we experience Him, the more we crave His presence because we've discovered something genuinely satisfying.

Sharpening discernment. The closer we walk with Jesus, the clearer we see. We recognize what's true, as opposed to what just sounds good. The Holy Spirit trains our spiritual senses to perceive what we once would have missed.

Expanding capacity to love. Perhaps the clearest sign of growth is that we care about people we once would have ignored. The Holy Spirit softens our heart toward difficult people and enables us to love beyond our natural capacity.

Growth isn't about spiritual perfection—it's about transformation. And that's something to celebrate.

We all need the encouragement, comfort, and peace that comes through God's grace. Our daily devotionals, known as Seeds of Hope, have been a means through which thousands of people have experienced this grace. Each devotional comes from God's Word and we pray this good "seed" finds good soil in your heart. Our aim is that the Seeds of Hope will be a great source of daily encouragement to you and that God will use them to draw you near to Him

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WINNING NUMBERS

MILLIONAIRE FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.27.26

3 7 29 35 49 5

TOP PRIZE:
\$1,000,000/year

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 55 Mins 17 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.25.26

7 10 47 48 50 14

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$145,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 40 Mins 18 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.26.26

5 8 36 37 45 5

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$3,120,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 15 Hrs 55 Mins 17 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.26.26

1 5 10 20 24

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$40,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 10 Mins 17 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.26.26

6 11 15 32 58 18

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 39 Mins 17 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.26.26

12 32 45 50 58 2

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$119,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 39 Mins 17 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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News from the Associated Press

PREP FOOTBALL

Mahpiya Luta 42, Little Wound 6
McLaughlin 24, Crow Creek Tribal School 12
Todd County 44, Lakota Tech 12
Walthill, Neb. 28, Tiospa Zina 14

Some high school football scores provided by Scorestream.com, <https://scorestream.com/>

PREP VOLLEYBALL

Aberdeen Central def. Rapid City Stevens, 15-25, 27-25, 25-18, 22-25, 15-7
Aberdeen Roncalli def. Redfield, 25-13, 25-11, 25-12
Bennett County def. Valentine, Neb., 19-25, 25-22, 25-21, 22-25, 16-14
Bon Homme def. Kimball-White Lake, 25-14, 25-23, 25-27, 25-21
Brandon Valley def. Sioux Falls Roosevelt, 25-12, 25-7, 25-9
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Some high school volleyball scores provided by Scorestream.com, <https://scorestream.com/>

Death toll rises in Nepal-China border disaster as lake poses new flood threat

By NIRANJAN SHRESTHA and SHRISTI KAFLE Associated Press

KATHMANDU, Nepal (AP) — Rescuers pulled out survivors caked in dark brown mud and helicopters lifted stranded people to safety Friday as Nepal and China raced to respond to catastrophic flash floods that killed more than 470 people and left more than 1,500 missing.

Nepali authorities said the death toll there rose to 469, and helicopters carried more than 3,000 people to safety. There was little information on survivors on the Chinese side, where the death toll rose to five Friday as state media showed evacuations of villages and leaders' efforts to direct the relief response.

China's state media previously said 558 people were missing. Across the border, Nepal's disaster management authority said Friday that 977 people were still unaccounted for. Hundreds of them were foreigners in the area to work, trek or make a pilgrimage to a sacred peak.

Authorities warn of further flooding from a new lake

Nepali police issued a fresh alert Friday after receiving information that a dam on the Tibet side has burst. Security personnel and rescue and relief workers were told to stay on high alert and immediately move to a safe location if necessary.

It is unclear if the dam bursting is related to flooding concerns over a barrier lake that formed after the initial flash floods, high up in the Chinese side of the Himalayan mountains. Chinese broadcaster CCTV said the lake was at an elevation of 2,950 meters (9,680 feet.)

Nepali and Chinese authorities earlier warned of further flooding from the barrier lake, which was already overflowing. They urged people in potentially affected areas to move to safer ground.

Nepal police spokesperson Abi Narayan Kafle told The Associated Press that the rescue operation was continuing but with high alert. "It hasn't stopped," he said.

Although the new lake is located more than 10 kilometers (6 miles) from Gyirong Port, the hard-hit border crossing with Nepal, rescue workers heading to the disaster zone were ordered to stop temporarily Friday

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morning owing to concern the lake would overflow.

Some 680 rescuers eventually reached the hardest-hit area at Gyirong by foot and via rafts after much effort. Some were dropped down from drones flown to the area, CCTV footage showed.

Thousands of people have been evacuated, others await rescue

Nepali Army rescuers were working to help people trapped in a hydropower tunnel in Rasuwa, part of the Upper Trishuli-1 Hydropower Project.

Video from the scene show rescuers helping the man, covered in dark brown mud, out of the tunnel by pulling and pushing. He was one of likely dozens trapped in the tunnel.

Army spokesperson Brig. Gen. Raja Ram Basnet told the AP the focus was on survivors.

"It is complicated to find the entry and exit points of the tunnel because everything has been covered by mud," Basnet said. "Our first priority is rescuing the stranded people."

Nepal's disaster management authority said 3,253 people had been airlifted by helicopter from the disaster area. Survivors, including injured people, were taken to Kathmandu and other locations.

Some felt the ground shake, then saw a 'black storm'

Scientists who've studied satellite images said bedrock underneath a glacier high in the Himalayan region had collapsed, taking part of the glacier with it. The rockfall was so extreme that it reached a magnitude 5.2 seismic measurement. The rocks and melted water then swelled the rivers in the valleys below, causing a torrent of water that swept buildings, bridges and earth downstream in Tibet and Nepal.

Customs officer Karbir Gaire was among some of the survivors in Timure, the closest Nepalese village to the border with China, where some 1,500 people had lived.

Gaire reached his office around 8 a.m. Wednesday and was working on his computer when he first felt the ground shake.

"Right after the shake, I noticed a black storm coming towards us," he recalled from Kathmandu, where he is back with family. "We all immediately started running out, and within a few seconds, we were climbing uphill on the opposite side of our office building. I think those 10 or so seconds saved some of us."

Gaire doesn't remember exactly how many people were in the office when the disaster struck, but 15 colleagues have gone missing. "It was like a Hollywood movie scene. I don't call it a flood, it was a tsunami."

Families around the world hope for news of loved ones

Nepal's tourism board has said that among the missing are more than 500 foreigners.

About 90 Americans were unaccounted for. U.S. President Donald Trump said the flooding was terrible to see, and he told reporters in the Oval Office he offered to provide Nepalese leaders "anything they want."

Rajan Tamang, a restaurant owner in New York City, said he learned from family in Kathmandu that his mother and sister were among those who died, while many other relatives and friends remained missing.

"My family was just waking up, and they didn't even get any information, and suddenly this flood came. Some of them are missing, some of them lost their life and only a few is alive," he told the AP after a vigil in New York.

Some of the missing may have been on a pilgrimage to Mount Kailash in Tibet, a sacred site for Hindus, Buddhists and others.

Vishnuram Ramaswamy, who works at a private company in the southern Indian city of Puducherry, said that he last spoke to his mother and two sisters who were on that pilgrimage Wednesday morning. It was a highly anticipated trip, something his mother had always wanted to do, he said.

"My mother said they were on their way towards the border area and said they'll reach their hotel and call us," he said. While he's in touch with government officials, and the travel agency, there's been no news.

"This was the last we spoke to them. They have been unreachable since."

Ebola outbreak in eastern Congo spreads to 2 new health zones with a total of 60 areas now affected

BUNIA, Congo (AP) — The fastest-growing Ebola outbreak in history has spread to two new health zones in eastern Congo, with a total of 60 now affected, according to the latest government figures published on Friday.

The two new zones affected are Biena and Manguredjipa in Congo's North Kivu province, where the case fatality rate is much higher than the overall rate of 48%, due in part to delayed response efforts, according to Congo's Ministry of Health data.

It said the outbreak has recorded 5,794 confirmed cases, including 2,786 deaths, as it is spreading at an unprecedented speed, faster than efforts to track and slow it.

Beloved New Orleans hospital, wracked by floods and grief in Hurricane Katrina, to get a makeover

By JACK BROOK Associated Press/Report for America

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — In the chaos of Hurricane Katrina, Charity Hospital in New Orleans became a scene of heartbreak and heroism, with doctors scrambling to keep patients alive without power or functioning medical equipment while floodwaters trapped them inside its darkened halls for days on end.

The massive hospital, a New Orleans landmark that long cared for the city's most vulnerable residents, was shuttered after the last patients and staff were rescued in 2005. Now, as Louisiana marks the storm's 21st anniversary Saturday, the long-vacant storm-damaged building is on the brink of new life.

New Orleans landmark is to become a medical research hub

Tulane University announced this summer that it is spearheading a \$500 million effort to convert Charity Hospital into a pioneering medical research facility, transforming the 1930s-era art deco building into a downtown hub of biomedical innovation. Construction is expected to start this fall.

Local leaders have embraced the project in a city where some hospitals have haunted New Orleans since Katrina. Dozens of patients died at the former Memorial hospital, now known as the Ochsner Baptist Medical Center, after floodwaters trapped them inside in sweltering conditions without power. Demolition crews this month began tearing down another complex, the Lindy Boggs Medical Center, which had sat blighted and vacant for more than 20 years after Katrina.

One of the deadliest and most destructive hurricanes in U.S. history, Katrina killed nearly 1,400 people across five states and racked up an estimated \$200 billion in damage, flattening homes along the nearby Gulf Coast and swamping entire neighborhoods with ruinous floods.

Tulane leaders say reviving the iconic landmark marks a major stride in putting behind the hurricane's dark days.

Charity Hospital "reflected the sort of commitment of New Orleans to the healthcare of the community," Tulane President Michael Fitts said. "Now it's being brought back in a way that makes the same commitment to the community."

Past moves to redevelop the art deco building fizzled

For generations, the Charity Hospital system served as New Orleans' safety net, treating all patients regardless of whether they had health insurance. The million-square-foot (93,000-square-meter) main building has remained empty since Katrina. In the intervening decades, various redevelopment gambits have fizzled.

The hospital was run by Louisiana State University, which determined that Katrina left the building too damaged to reopen — an assessment that was disputed by some hospital staff and community members. Instead, LSU used federal disaster relief funding to open a new hospital.

After Katrina made landfall in Louisiana, the failure of New Orleans' federal levee system inundated about 80% of the city in floodwaters.

A doctor recalls canoeing through the flooded city to check on hospital patients

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Dr. Lee Hamm, dean of the Tulane University School of Medicine, recalled canoeing through the submerged city to check on the welfare of patients and health care staff.

"Everyone was exhibiting a lot of courage at the moment," Hamm said. "People were going about doing what they needed to do."

The new medical research hub is scheduled to be completed in 2029.

Plans include providing space for medical and public health programs as part of what Fitts called "the largest, most significant initiative in the history of Tulane." The new accommodations will also include labs for hundreds of researchers, space for biomedical startups, and classrooms.

Hamm said he hopes the hub will spur medical advancements that benefit the entire Gulf South.

Anticipating a bright, new future for the Charity Hospital building, New Orleans Mayor Helena Moreno called the redevelopment "a welcome step forward and an opportunity to put this historic property back to productive use."

Norway's crown prince becomes King Haakon VIII after his father's death

By JAN M. OLSEN and STEFANIE DAZIO Associated Press

COPENHAGEN, Denmark (AP) — Norway has a new king, whose tasks will include stabilizing the Scandinavian country's monarchy and boosting the royal family's popularity after his wife's past contacts with deceased sex offender Jeffrey Epstein and his stepson's rape conviction.

Crown Prince Haakon, 53, became King Haakon VIII when his father, Harald V, died Friday. Haakon's oldest child now becomes Crown Princess Ingrid Alexandra and the heir to the throne.

Haakon knows the ropes. As his father aged and his health began to fail in recent years, the prince stepped in as the country's regent on several occasions.

Norway's monarchy has old roots, tracing its origins to King Harald Fairhair in the ninth century. When Norway regained its independence from Sweden in 1905, three-quarters of voters in a national plebiscite approved restoring the monarchy. Today, the role is largely symbolic as the power lies with an elected parliament, but the country's royal family retains celebrity and a role in promoting the wealthy nation around the world.

Haakon is the younger child of Harald, born two years after his sister, Princess Märtha Louise. As the oldest male, however, he became heir to the throne when his grandfather, King Olav, died in 1991. The Norwegian Constitution was altered in 1990 to allow future firstborns — regardless of gender — to take precedence in the line of succession. However, it was not applied retroactively.

Haakon said in a 1998 book that as a child he dreamed of owning a toy shop, but he soon realized that his path was already paved and one day he would become king.

He holds a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of California at Berkeley and a master's degree in development studies from the London School of Economics and Political Science, with a specialization in international trade and Africa. In 1995, he graduated from the Royal Norwegian Naval Academy, and he also completed the Foreign Ministry's trainee program for diplomats.

An avid surfer, skier and sportsman, he told Norwegian broadcaster NRK that if he hadn't been a royal, he would have been a surfer. A music lover — he likes rock and rap — he attended festivals across Europe as a youth.

Haakon sought the king's permission to marry

Haakon knew his relationship would face an uphill battle for acceptance when he met Mette-Marit Tjessem Høiby at a popular music festival in Norway in 1999. She was a single mother whose son's father had been sentenced to prison for cocaine possession, and she had been seen at parties where illegal drugs were used.

The country was divided. Some cheered for love, others were skeptical. The Norwegian newspaper VG wrote in 2000 that Haakon "lives closer to the people than any other heir to the throne before him."

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In a May 2000 interview with NRK, Haakon said that in the early 1990s, "a youth culture emerged in Oslo" and he acknowledged that Mette-Marit was "an active part of this environment at the time."

"It is clear that there is relatively extravagant partying there," Haakon said.

Nevertheless, he won permission from his father, who had also married a commoner, to wed Mette-Marit. And despite her background, the Norwegian people found much to like about this statuesque blond woman with striking eyes and a ready smile, a down-to-earth manner and an undisguised love for Haakon.

They wed in August 2001 at the Oslo Cathedral. The couple's popularity soared thanks to a carefully cultivated blend of the common touch and the glamor and grace demanded of royalty. They were constantly on the covers of gossip magazines, yet tried to live relatively normal and private family lives.

They have two children, Ingrid Alexandra and Prince Sverre Magnus. Haakon also became the stepfather of Mette-Marit's son, Marius Borg Høiby, who has no royal title.

Royal family's reputation took a hit from Høiby's trial

In June, Høiby was sentenced to four years in prison after being convicted of rape. He was found guilty of two of the four rape charges he was facing and acquitted of the other two. He was also convicted of assault and abuse in a close relationship. Høiby's lawyers said he will appeal the convictions.

The trial unfolded amid renewed scrutiny of the royal family following disclosures about Mette-Marit's past contacts with Jeffrey Epstein, the deceased sex offender. She has publicly apologized for the association and said she exercised poor judgment in maintaining contact with him. She isn't accused of any wrongdoing.

In a television interview in March, she said she was manipulated and deceived by Epstein and felt unsafe during a 2013 encounter with him at his Palm Beach, Florida, mansion.

In 2018, the royal palace announced that Mette-Marit had been diagnosed with a rare form of chronic pulmonary fibrosis, meaning she sometimes must take a break from her official duties. The incurable condition made breathing increasingly difficult, she had a dry cough and fatigue, weight loss and loss of appetite. She received a lung transplant in June.

In connection with the couple's 50th birthdays in 2023, NRK interviewed Haakon and aired an old video of him playing guitar, with Ingrid Alexandra and Mette-Marit singing, and another one where he and his children mimic the moves of a Norwegian rapper. He watched the clips and burst into laughter, saying that they showed that "I am all in."

One task for the new king will be to shore up popular support for the royal family. While a majority of people still support it, the proportion has declined in recent years and took a battering this year as Høiby's trial played out. Critics of Haakon's sister, Märtha Louise, who has written books in which she claimed to have contact with angels, also blame her for the family's reputational troubles.

Märtha Louise, who was previously married for 14 years, in 2024 wed Durek Verrett, an American who describes himself as a shaman and a healer on his website. In 2022, she announced that she would no longer officially represent the Norwegian royal house, following "many questions relating to me and my fiancé's role."

A poll published by Norway's Dagbladet newspaper in late 2022 showed 68% of respondents saying they wanted to keep the monarchy. When NRK asked the same question in 2017, support for the royal house stood at 81%.

Trump administration starts building border wall project in Arizona over tribe's objections

By MIKELLA SCHUETTLER Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — The Trump administration has begun work on a project to build a stretch of border wall in southern Arizona along part of a Native American tribe's reservation, pushing ahead with one of its signature projects despite protests from the tribe.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection says the area is a dangerous smuggling route and that building the wall will close a longstanding security gap. But members of the Tohono O'odham Nation, whose membership spans both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border, have accused the administration of trespassing and say

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the construction will damage land sacred to the tribe.

The wall segment is part of a \$46 billion effort by the Trump administration to fill the border with 30-foot (9-meter) steel bollard walls, vehicle barriers, and technology designed to stop undocumented immigration and smuggling.

But as building efforts have ramped up, the administration has run into opposition from landowners, environmental groups, and Native American tribes who say construction is violating property rights and desecrating sacred Indigenous sites.

The Tohono O'odham Nation said in a statement Tuesday that about 20 Customs and Border Protection officers, working with contractors, went onto the tribe's land early that morning to begin construction.

Drone videos published by nation officials show roughly 14 vehicles and an industrial drill at one of the sites.

A federal judge permitted the government to move forward with construction earlier this month, but the tribe says the contractors are violating tribal codes and trespassing to access the border wall site.

The Tohono O'odham Nation, which has 37,000 members including thousands who live in Mexico, sued the federal government in June in an attempt to block construction of the border wall. The tribe argued that the wall would cause "significant devastation" on the reservation, including the destruction of mountain peaks sacred to the tribe, and would alter boundaries of their nation.

US District Judge Richard Leon in Washington, D.C., an appointee of former President George W. Bush, ruled in favor of the government, noting that the border wall would be built on a 60-foot (18-meter) wide buffer zone of federally owned land called the Roosevelt Reservation.

"Defendants have not yet articulated plans to construct outside the Roosevelt Reservation," the judge wrote in his opinion.

The Tohono O'odham Nation said that even if construction were contained to the Roosevelt Reservation, driving onto tribal land to access the area still constitutes trespassing.

"The contractors, who are on the Nation illegally, were accompanied by agents as they worked on three separate locations near the border with drill trucks to conduct soil sampling and other activities," tribal officials said in a statement.

The CBP agents were masked, armed, and set up a vehicle blockade to stop tribal police from removing the contractors, according to Tohono O'odham officials. The nation had set up "No Trespassing" signs before Tuesday.

So far, no physical confrontations between police or members of the Tohono O'odham Nation have been reported.

CBP defended the need for the wall in a statement Tuesday, saying the desert spanning the Tohono O'odham Nation is a corridor for drug smuggling.

"The project will close one of the most dangerous smuggling and trafficking corridors on the Southwest border: remote desert that has facilitated decades of drug loads, migrant deaths, and cartel activity," said CBP Commissioner Rodney Scott.

Tribal officials said they're exploring further legal actions in an effort to remove contractors.

SLSCO Ltd., the Texas-based construction company building the section in Arizona, has secured over \$390 million in funding from the Department of Homeland Security to build the border wall since 2023.

Six months on, the Iran war has changed the Middle East, but not in the way its architects had hoped

By JOSEPH KRAUSS Associated Press

It's been six months since the United States and Israel attacked Iran with the perennial goal of transforming the Middle East through military force. The region has changed, but not in the way they had hoped.

The Islamic Republic survived the assassination of its top leaders and weeks of heavy bombing, and found a potent form of leverage in the Strait of Hormuz. Gulf Arab nations saw worrying gaps open up in the American security umbrella they have relied on for decades — and some are looking at alternatives.

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Israel has once again thrashed its enemies without defeating them, and after nearly three years of war in Gaza and new land seizures, is at risk of a generational rupture with the U.S., its closest ally. Hopes of normalizing relations with Saudi Arabia — another enduring U.S. and Israeli aspiration — have dimmed even further.

When they attacked Iran on Feb. 28, the U.S. and Israel hoped to topple its clerical leadership and replace it with a pro-Western government. Instead, they've ended up with a "hardened and very radical regime," said Barbara Leaf, a former ambassador who served as assistant secretary of state for the Middle East in the Biden administration.

"That is going to be exceptionally difficult to deal with, to say the least," she said. Iran's "confidence has grown over the months that it cannot only survive, but it can prevail, it can reset the regional landscape."

Iran was on the ropes before the attack

In the runup to the war, the Islamic Republic appeared more vulnerable than at any point since Saddam Hussein's Iraq invaded in 1980.

Iran's currency had cratered, setting off some of the biggest anti-government protests in its history, which were brutally suppressed in January, with thousands killed. Israel and the U.S. had pounded its military and nuclear sites during a 12-day war the previous summer, and its militant allies had been throttled in the wars that followed Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack out of Gaza.

But the tide changed shortly after the initial U.S. and Israeli strikes, as Iran's leaders were quickly replaced and its people — sheltering from the war — ignored exhortations from the attackers to rise up again.

Iran effectively closed the Strait of Hormuz, a critical trade route for oil and gas, and attacked Gulf countries hosting U.S. troops, rattling the global economy. U.S. President Donald Trump agreed to a ceasefire in April and signed a deal with Iran in June, which crumbled weeks later.

Iran is now determined to exert permanent control over the strait, to use it to ward off future attacks and secure other concessions, while giving no ground on its disputed nuclear program. It's a risky gamble, especially as the U.S. tightens its blockade and vows new sanctions on Iran's already battered economy.

"Iran has demonstrated that Hormuz gives it significant leverage, but prolonged disruption also hurts its neighbors, China, and the global economy, while encouraging alternatives to the strait," said Yoel Guzansky, an expert on Iran and the Gulf at Israel's Institute for National Security Studies.

"Tehran's danger is confusing its ability to survive with victory and demanding more than its leverage can deliver," he said.

Gulf nations doubt US security guarantees

For decades, the U.S. has been committed to protecting wealthy Gulf oil exporters from external aggression, using a sprawling network of bases across the region.

The arrangement helped secure global energy markets, deterred Saddam's Iraq and later Iran, and contributed to the United Arab Emirates and other Gulf nations becoming havens of prosperity in a volatile region.

It's been tested before, but never like this.

Iran retaliated against Israel, but it also trained its missiles and drones on Gulf nations that had hoped to stay out of the war. It struck U.S. bases and critical energy infrastructure, stretching air defenses and drawing down American supplies of sophisticated interceptors.

Iran responded to attacks on its civilian infrastructure by striking its neighbors' desalination plants. That raised fears that a war begun without consultation with Gulf nations could lead to catastrophic attacks on their water and electricity.

"The fact that the war began without a clear political objective and against the advice of key regional partners, and that there has not been clear evidence of a Plan B once the initial attacks failed to dislodge the Iranian regime, is likely to undermine confidence in the U.S. across the region and may take some time to repair," said Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, a Gulf expert at Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy.

Last month, Saudi Arabia entered into a new defense pact with Pakistan and Turkey, an early indication that stalwart American allies might seek new security arrangements. Their options are limited, however.

"The dilemma facing Gulf states is there is no viable alternative to the full range of defense and security

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networks with the U.S.," Ulrichsen said.

Israel batters its enemies but risks losing its closest friend

Lebanon's Iran-backed Hezbollah launched missiles into Israel days after the outbreak of the war, triggering heavy retaliatory airstrikes and another ground invasion. Israel has reoccupied large parts of southern Lebanon, adding to its wider seizure of territory following the Oct. 7 attack.

Its many tactical victories have come at a mounting cost in international isolation. Israel has been widely accused of genocide in Gaza, and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been indicted by the International Criminal Court for crimes against humanity, all of which Israel adamantly denies.

Of greater concern for Israel is its unprecedented erosion of support in the United States. That accelerated as some critics came to see it as having led the U.S. into another Mideast war, something to which the Trump administration has at times lent credence.

As the war settled into a stalemate over the summer, outspoken critics of Israel won some key Democratic primaries across the United States and more than half of House Democrats voted to cut aid to Israel. Israel has also come in for growing criticism from the right.

In addition to deteriorating sentiment in the U.S., there's less chance of forming stronger ties with other countries. Normalization of ties between Israel and Saudi Arabia appears increasingly distant.

"The conflicts that have swept across the region since Oct. 7 have led officials in Saudi Arabia to view the current Israeli leadership as contributing to regional instability and not therefore a viable diplomatic partner at the moment," Ulrichsen said.

Trump used to say he saw a quick end to his Iran war. Six months later, he claims he's in no hurry

By AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump arrives at an awkward moment for his presidency on Friday as the U.S.-Israel war against Iran reaches the six-month mark, a notable milestone for a conflict that the Republican leader repeatedly assured Americans would be a "little excursion" lasting a matter of weeks.

The war isn't over, though Trump claims that through bombs and blockade, he has already devastated Iran's leadership, military and economy.

And this week his administration said it would turn its focus to increasing economic pressure — rather than military action — to try to finish off Iran. The shifting strategy centers on threats to punish any country or entity that continues to conduct business with Tehran.

The turn to using sanctions as the cudgel of choice comes as the administration weighs diminished munitions stockpiles after months of war, sparking concerns that the prolonged conflict could undermine U.S. military readiness in other parts of the globe.

As the conflict grinds on, Trump's talk of finding a quick end to the war also appears to be fading. He stressed this week that he's "not in a hurry" to get Iran back to the negotiating table, and he continues making the case that the Islamic Republic's leadership is on the ropes.

"They're not paying their troops. They're in deep trouble. They have very little capacity," Trump told reporters Thursday. "We don't want to speak to them. We're not looking to meet or anything," he said.

It's unclear how — or if — Trump will address the six-month anniversary of a conflict that has already cost the United States more than \$37.5 billion and done damage to his popularity ahead of critical November elections for his party. The president is spending Friday in Houston, where he'll honor the Artemis II NASA crew for their 10-day mission around the moon earlier this year.

Trump is declaring 'mission accomplished' — a phrase that hurt a Republican predecessor

On its face, the moment is complicated for the "America First" leader who fiercely criticized his White House predecessors for wasting American taxpayer money and U.S. troops' lives in Middle East conflicts and vowed on the campaign trail to keep the military out of "endless wars."

But Trump has bristled at suggestions that this war — in which no American troops have deployed into

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Iran — can be compared to the yearslong wars in Iraq and Afghanistan in which more than 7,000 Americans were killed.

His Republican predecessor, President George W. Bush, was widely mocked for a 2003 speech aboard the USS Abraham Lincoln beneath a White House-produced banner that read “Mission Accomplished.” It came to symbolize a premature declaration of victory for the Iraq War, which would go on for nearly nine more years. More than two decades later, there are still U.S. troops stationed in Iraq.

Trump’s war has stretched on far longer than he told Americans it would. It didn’t stop him from sharing a social media post this week declaring “MISSION ACCOMPLISHED 2026.” The AI-generated image features Trump against a backdrop of U.S. fighter jets, a warship and American flags above smaller images of Bush and former Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who was killed in an Israeli strike in the opening salvos of the war.

Trump has consistently emphasized that the U.S. and Israel campaign has been devastating for Iran’s navy and air force. Iranian officials have said the country has suffered \$270 billion in direct and indirect damage. Israeli military strikes in the first weeks of the war wiped out much of the theocratic government’s leadership structure, including Khamenei.

But Iran has found leverage through its own strikes in the critical Strait of Hormuz, where relatively few vessels carrying oil and liquefied natural gas are risking passage. Trump again declared Thursday that the “Strait of Hormuz is open,” saying 24 vessels passed through a day earlier. That’s a fraction of the roughly 130 vessels that passed through the vital waterway daily before the war began.

Trump is showing little interest in talks

Mediators Qatar and Pakistan continue to press for a diplomatic off-ramp from the two sides. Qatar’s prime minister, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, was in Tehran on Thursday to discuss a proposed plan between Iran and Oman to boost traffic through the Strait of Hormuz.

But in Washington, Trump has shown little interest in getting back to the preliminary deal reached in June that aimed to reopen the strait and launch talks about Iran’s nuclear program. That deal fell apart within weeks after Iran started attacking ships.

At the same time, Trump says the U.S. effort to economically choke off Tehran is working, with a U.S. naval blockade preventing Iranian oil from making it to market as the trickle of vessels carrying oil from other Gulf nations pass through.

“We have control and we have the blockade,” Trump said. “Iran is not getting anything. Nothing is going through.”

Iran is badly battered, but has a history of showing resilience

There’s no doubt that the strikes combined with decades of international sanctions have battered Iran, said Aarathi Krishnan, a geopolitical risk analyst at RAKSHA Intelligence Future.

But as Trump tries to turn to a new chapter in the war, Krishnan argues the Republican may be misguided in concluding that more pressure on Tehran — which has spent decades adapting to international economic sanctions — will produce the political outcome he wants.

Indeed, Iran’s economy in the run-up to the start of the war was mired in surging inflation, according to the International Monetary Fund. National income per person had fallen from about \$8,000 in 2012 to \$5,000 in 2024, according to World Bank data.

But Tehran has also shown resilience, selling discounted oil and establishing opaque shipping and financial networks, Krishnan said.

“This administration has completely underestimated the Iranian resolve,” Krishnan said. “This is not new to the Iranian regime.”

Trump must decide how far he’s willing to go with sanctions

Richard Goldberg, who served as a senior adviser on Iran at the National Security Council during Trump’s first White House term, argues that Iran now finds itself in “uncharted waters” if the administration follows through with a truly biting campaign to pressure Iranian trade partners.

“What we should be seeing is an attempt to seal off every escape hatch the regime has left,” said Goldberg, who is now at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, a hawkish Washington think tank. “Use

the economic power of the United States to layer a naval blockade with an air and land embargo while dropping the hammer on anyone who gives the regime access to hard currency — whether that's in the Middle East, China or even Europe."

But it remains to be seen how far the administration is willing to go.

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent this week unveiled a campaign the White House calls "Operation Economic Outcast," but only issued warnings to nations to cut trade and has yet to announce any secondary sanctions. Bessent told reporters the administration wanted countries to have a chance to shift away from Iran before it was too late — and acknowledged there was economic risk to the U.S., too, in moving ahead.

China, which is Iran's biggest trade partner and oil buyer, responded by expressing its opposition to "illegal unilateral sanctions."

Pressed Thursday about why he wasn't already sanctioning Chinese banks, Trump offered a cryptic response.

"Who said I'm not? You don't know if I'm doing it," Trump said. "I don't have to announce everything, do I?"

Judge says Pentagon's measures against Anthropic were 'illegal and baseless'

By KAITLYN HUAMANI AP Technology Writer

A federal judge has ruled in favor of artificial intelligence company Anthropic in its legal battle against the Pentagon after the government labeled the company as a supply chain risk earlier this year.

U.S. District Judge Rita Lin issued a written order Thursday night that the Pentagon acted illegally by punishing the AI company for its criticism of the Department of Defense's views on AI use. The government is expected to fight the ruling.

The dispute between the AI company and the government broke out in February when President Donald Trump and Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth accused Anthropic of endangering national security and designated the company a supply chain risk. Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei refused to back down over concerns the company's products could be used for mass surveillance or autonomous armed drones.

Lin wrote that the government's actions "were based on a desire to make a public example out of Anthropic for its 'arrogance' in criticizing the government, not based on any articulable basis to believe that Anthropic would actually sabotage its model."

An Anthropic spokesperson said in a statement that they welcome the judge's ruling: "We remain focused on working productively with the government to harness AI for our national security so all Americans benefit from this technology."

The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

In the 59-page ruling, Lin, an appointee of former President Joe Biden, wrote that neither the Constitution nor the federal statute the government invoked allows them to "impose sweeping penalties based principally on Anthropic's critique of the Administration's views."

Anthropic sued the Pentagon over the supply chain risk designation in March for what it called an "unlawful campaign of retaliation" over its refusal to allow unrestricted military use of its technology.

The legal challenge intensified an unusually public dispute over how AI can be used in warfare and mass surveillance. Anthropic's primary tech industry rival, ChatGPT maker OpenAI, made its own deal to work with the Pentagon just hours after the government punished Anthropic for its stance.

Anthropic and OpenAI are each ramping up for buzzy initial public offerings.

Anthropic has also filed a separate and narrower case that is still pending in the federal appeals court in Washington, D.C. That case involves a different rule the Pentagon is using to try to declare Anthropic a supply chain risk.

Earlier in the legal proceedings, Lin had temporarily blocked the Pentagon from labeling the company as a supply chain risk and blocked enforcement of Trump's social media directive ordering all federal agencies

to stop using Anthropic and its chatbot Claude.

In a hearing July 30, Lin had said that the government's position was "really troubling" to her and that it seemed "at odds to me with the First Amendment." She also said she believed the record had "gotten worse for the government" over time.

In that same hearing, Department of Justice lawyers argued that the nature of AI models is "so staggeringly enormous and opaque" that the Defense Department cannot evaluate it in the same way it would a physical piece of hardware.

Anthropic lawyer Michael Mongan said in that hearing that the government's actions "profoundly harm Anthropic" and that they "threaten more broadly to chill speech and debate on a very important issue."

Anthropic has also filed a separate and narrower case that is still pending in the federal appeals court in Washington, D.C. That case involves a different rule the Pentagon is using to try to declare Anthropic a supply chain risk.

About 90 Americans unaccounted for after catastrophic floods hit Nepal and Tibet

By KRISTIN M. HALL and R.J. RICO Associated Press

McMINNVILLE, Tenn (AP) — U.S. officials said about 90 U.S. citizens remained unaccounted for Thursday, a day after catastrophic flash floods engulfed a border area of China and Nepal, killing hundreds of people. A spiritual organization said that 22 Americans associated with it were unaccounted for.

In a statement, the U.S. State Department said it is not aware of any U.S. deaths, but three Americans have been rescued.

Many of the missing were on a pilgrimage to Mount Kailash in Tibet, a sacred site for Hindus, Buddhists and others.

Social media posts were surfacing Thursday from loved ones pleading for people to provide updates or circulate information about Americans they had lost contact with — a Virginia woman traveling with a tour group, a Texas couple on a birthday trip and a mother accompanying her 14-year-old daughter.

Ohio man missing

Among those on a guided tour was Venus Rajnikant Patel, a 45-year-old Indian-born U.S. citizen who recently moved from St. Louis to Cincinnati to help his family.

Patel's brother, Dennis, said Venus called him and their parents a few hours before the floods, showing them his hotel room on the Nepalese side of the border and talking about how excited he was to cross into Tibet. He had been planning the pilgrimage for two years, his brother said.

Patel's friend Jolene Gosha said she and her friends knew Patel was in Nepal and were devastated when they realized his hotel was right along the border where the floods swept through.

"We're just hoping, hoping that by some chance he was able to climb his way out of it," Gosha said. "I don't want to give myself false hope because I know the reality is that he's probably not with us."

Gosha described Patel as an avid traveler who loves dancing and frequently organizes surprise "flash mob" performances for his friends' weddings and birthdays.

"He's always smiling from ear to ear," Gosha said. "He'd dance so goofily and didn't care who was watching."

Long Island man described as 'life of the party'

Another American who is missing is 72-year-old Jitendra Patel, a Long Island resident who was with a tour group on a Hindu pilgrimage to Mount Kailash, according to his son, Sunny Patel. Jitendra last called Wednesday morning local time on WhatsApp to say that he had crossed the border into Tibet.

When Sunny first saw video of the flooding he thought no one could survive it, Sunny said. He then contacted his mother to ask about his father's whereabouts. His mother said Jitendra was in the exact same area as the flooding.

"My heart sank," Sunny said, adding that he "didn't think it was possible that my dad would be there at ground zero."

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Sunny described his father as the “life of the party” who loves playing golf and socializing. Jitendra is retired but drives Uber for fun because he can talk to people.

Sunny and his family are somber but “maybe hopeful,” Sunny said. But they haven’t heard from Jitendra. WhatsApp messages sent to him aren’t being delivered, Sunny said.

“It gets worse by every hour, obviously,” he added.

Indian spiritual guru Jaggi Vasudev, also known as Sadhguru, said in a post on X that 77 people returning from Mount Kailash with groups organized by his Isha Foundation were at an immigration center in Gyirong, Tibet, when the floods struck. Leslie Crespi, a community liaison for the foundation’s U.S. campus, said that 22 of them were Americans affiliated with the foundation and that three volunteers supporting the trekkers were also at the immigration center when the floods hit.

“We had communication with the coordinator of the group at about 9:05 Nepalese time saying that they had arrived there. And then by 9:14 is when this flash flood hit,” Crespi said.

The trekkers were “like family,” Crespi said. And for many people that go on the treks to Nepal, it’s a “lifelong dream to go and be there,” she added.

The Isha Foundation is a spiritual organization based in India and its U.S. campus, the Isha Institute of Inner-sciences, is a yoga and meditation retreat center located in the mountains near McMinnville, Tennessee.

At a candlelight vigil in New York City on Thursday, Tak Ruwali, a Long Island resident who is from one of the Nepalese districts affected by the flooding, said that he is talking with people in Nepal and many regional tourist guides are “out of contact now.”

“It means they are probably gone,” Ruwali added.

Talking to reporters in the Oval Office on Thursday, President Donald Trump said U.S. officials have spoken with Nepalese leaders and offered to provide “anything they want.”

Trump said there were 50 or 60 Americans in the area but added that a full accounting hasn’t been completed.

Catastrophic floods kill over 390 in Nepal and Tibet, with more than 1,400 missing

By NIRANJAN SHRESTHA and SHRISTI KAFLE Associated Press

DEVIGHAT, Nepal (AP) — Rescue teams and military helicopters searched Thursday for hundreds of missing people along the mountainous Nepal-China border, where a deadly torrent of water and mud several stories high swept through communities a day earlier following a glacier collapse.

Videos of the disaster showed people running before the floodwaters swallowed them up and washed out buildings and bridges. More than 390 people were killed, according to authorities in Nepal and China, and more than 1,400 were missing, including hundreds of foreigners and pilgrims. Hundreds of others were displaced across the Himalayan region.

The lush valleys of the Himalayan mountain range — home to many of the world’s highest peaks and remaining glaciers — are especially vulnerable to flooding and landslides. Melting glaciers have become more common because of human-caused climate change.

Images showed buildings and streets in Nepal’s hard-hit Nuwakot district slathered in mud, debris hanging from trees and stunned survivors caked in mud. In Tibet’s Shigatse prefecture, a two-lane road running along a river was completely buried. Aerial footage also showed a lake had formed and expanded on the China-Nepal border, with authorities warning of a possible dam break.

Rajan Tamang, a restaurant owner in New York City, said he learned from family in Kathmandu that his mother and sister were among those who died, while many other relatives and friends remained missing.

“My family was just waking up, and they didn’t even get any information, and suddenly this flood came. Some of them are missing, some of them lost their life and only a few is alive,” he told The Associated Press after a vigil in New York.

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U.S. President Donald Trump said the flooding was terrible to see, describing how "strong, well-built buildings were wiped out like they were toothpicks."

Speaking to reporters in the Oval Office, Trump said the U.S. spoke with Nepalese leaders and offered to provide "anything they want."

Helicopters deployed for rescue because of damaged roads

The torrential floods that ran miles through mountains left at least 389 people dead and more than 460 injured in Nepal, according to police. Another 910 people are reported to be missing in Nepal. Authorities in Tibet, an autonomous region of China, reported at least three dead and 558 missing.

Lila Pieters Yahia, the U.N. resident coordinator in Nepal, said Nepal's government had mobilized over 30,000 security personnel for search and rescue and "they're working day and night."

She told U.N. reporters in a video press conference from Kathmandu that over 35 bridges have been destroyed and about 40 kilometers (25 miles) of road have been damaged, making access to the flooded area difficult.

"The government has established a relief fund and already the World Bank, India, China and the U.S. have committed to pledge \$229 million to support," Pieters Yahia said. The U.N. has given \$2 million from its humanitarian relief fund for immediate assistance and Switzerland has given the U.N. \$1 million, she said.

The Nepalese army has rescued more than 100 people by helicopter, army spokesperson Brig. Gen. Raja Ram Basnet said. Army teams also evacuated people trapped inside facilities linked to the Trishuli hydropower project, he added.

Dozens of injured people were transported to Kathmandu for medical care.

Rescuers found bodies in Chitwan district hundreds of kilometers (miles) downstream from the hardest-hit areas.

Bishal Kumar Bhandari, chairman of the Nepal Red Cross Society, said the agency has shifted its focus from rescue to large-scale relief operations in the flood-hit districts. He said that around 1,200 people were displaced from at least three villages.

In Tibet, the roaring mudslide engulfed a multistory port building and swallowed a bus parking lot at the land border crossing of Gyirong Port. It left mud more than 1½ meters (5 feet) deep on average, Chinese state broadcaster CCTV reported. Roads leading to the crossing were all damaged, while secondary collapses or landslides might occur as rain continued in the area, it added.

China's premier, Li Qiang, arrived Thursday in Gyirong to direct rescue efforts, alongside 500 military and paramilitary personnel. Military helicopters circled overhead, searching for survivors, assessing the disaster and mapping out possible rescue and evacuation routes.

Chinese authorities also warned that the newly formed lake at the confluence of the Tsogyal and the Purupqiangzangbu rivers is overflowing and may burst. The lake contained 2 million cubic meters (70 million cubic feet) of water as of Thursday morning and was expected to receive another 3 million cubic meters (106 million cubic feet) in the next three days, China's Ministry of Water Resources said.

The ministry warned there was a high risk the dam could fail, causing further flooding.

More than 1,400 are missing, including hundreds of foreigners

Many people in the disaster zone waited to hear whether their loved ones were alive.

Shova Shrestha, 33, has spent more than a day seeking word of her husband, Rajan Shrestha. She said his phone rang when she first called after the floods, but it later became unreachable. Since then, she has watched every helicopter that landed in Bidur, the capital of Nuwakot district, hoping he might be among the survivors.

"I keep looking at each helicopter, hoping he will step out of it," Shova said.

Among the missing are 517 foreigners, according to Nepal's tourism board.

They include 178 people from India, more than 60 from the U.S. and people from 30 other countries, including Ukraine, the U.K., South Africa and Japan, the board said.

Many of the missing may have been on a pilgrimage to Mount Kailash in Tibet, a sacred site for Hindus, Buddhists and others.

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Seventy-seven people from one pilgrimage group were caught in the floods at the immigration office at the border, according to a post on X from Indian spiritual guru Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev.

A visibly emotional Sadhguru said in a video that the group included 22 Americans and others from various countries. He said that there was no official information on their whereabouts.

The U.S. State Department said 90 Americans were unaccounted for in China and Nepal after the flood. The department said it was unaware of any U.S. deaths and that three Americans had been rescued.

The Indian Ministry of External Affairs said Thursday that 288 of the country's people, including some workers on a power project, were missing.

Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Lin Jian said that nearly 100 Chinese citizens were missing in Nepal. According to preliminary information, 260 of those missing in Tibet were foreigners, he said.

A glacier collapse may have caused floods

The U.S. Geological Survey first reported a magnitude 4.4 earthquake early Wednesday, about 65 kilometers (40 miles) north of Kathmandu, near the border.

The agency later updated its analysis to say the seismic event was instead a magnitude 5.2 glacier collapse that sent debris flowing downstream.

Climate experts at the Kathmandu-based International Center for Integrated Mountain Development said an avalanche from a glacier likely caused Wednesday's flash flood.

In an emailed statement, they said water levels at one point on the Trishuli River rose by as much as 9 meters (27 feet) in half an hour.

The increasingly unstable Himalayan ice system threatens communities, infrastructure and water supplies across one of the world's most densely populated regions.

The region saw similar flash floods in August 2025, when a glacial lake in Tibet overflowed because of high temperatures. Nine people were killed, and critical infrastructure, including a bridge connecting Nepal and China, was damaged.

Judge again blocks Trump mail ballot executive order in ruling that's likely to be swiftly appealed

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

A federal judge on Thursday halted — at least for now — attempts to implement President Donald Trump's executive order limiting mail voting.

The move stalled the directive for a second time only about a week before the first mail ballots are due to be sent out for the rapidly approaching midterm elections. U.S. District Court Judge Indira Talwani blocked the government from implementing the order for two weeks.

The case could soon be appealed back to the Supreme Court, days after the justices handed down a procedural decision that allowed the the administration to move ahead.

The ruling Thursday came after Democrats and voting rights groups refiled their lawsuits to comply with the recent Supreme Court decision. The high court's conservative majority did not rule on the legality of Trump's executive order, instead saying Talwani had acted too soon.

Now the administration has issued a formal rule governing whether the U.S. Postal Service will deliver states' mail ballots, effectively restarting the legal fight.

The whipsawing legal battle has major ramifications for the midterms. Nearly one-third of Americans vote by mail and election officials contend there isn't enough time to revise their systems to comply with the new Postal Service directives.

The Postal Service says it won't deliver mail ballots unless states provide a list of voters who should receive them and format the envelopes in a certain way.

"Plaintiff states have neither time nor funds to design new mail ballots, seek approval of the new designs, order production of mail ballots, update their own election management systems, train election officials to use the USPS portal and upload citizen data to the portal, all before the midterms," Talwani wrote Thursday.

The White House did not immediately respond to a message seeking comment. A hearing in the case

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is set for Sept. 3.

"This rule is a clear attempt by the federal government to interfere in elections it has no power to control. Today, a federal court halted it before this administration could wreak havoc on our elections," New York Attorney General Letitia James, one of two dozen Democratic attorneys general who filed one of the suits, said in a statement after the order.

Democrats and voting rights groups contend the Postal Services' demand is unconstitutional. The Constitution, they note, grants states and, in some cases, Congress the power to make election rules — not the president or Postal Service.

That reasoning led courts to block Trump's first executive order, issued last year, that sought to change election procedures, such as requiring documentary proof of citizenship to register.

The president has long targeted mail voting, which he falsely blames for his 2020 election loss even though he himself uses it to cast his ballot.

A report by the Brookings Institution published in 2025 found that mail voting fraud occurred in only about four cases out of every 10 million mail ballots cast.

Trump issued the executive order targeting mail voting, his second one related to elections since he returned from office, in March.

Opponents quickly sued, but the administration argued the claims were premature because it hadn't issued rules outlining how it would implement the order. The administration won an initial case in Washington, D.C., with that reasoning, but Talwani placed injunctions against implementing the order for the November midterms in two separate cases she heard in Boston.

The Supreme Court's conservative majority on Monday struck down one of those holds.

Talwani, nominated to the bench by President Barack Obama, reluctantly removed the second injunction shortly after. The plaintiffs then moved to refile their cases, citing the Postal Service's publishing of its final rule, in hopes of winning a more durable victory.

Shackled Tate brothers testify in bid to get out of jail, but judge delays decision

By DAVID FISCHER Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — Social media influencers Andrew and Tristan Tate took the witness stand in federal court on Thursday and said they can't adequately defend themselves from criminal sex charges if they have to remain in a Miami jail while fighting extradition to the United Kingdom.

During nearly two hours in a Miami courtroom, the Tates, in shackles and tan jail jumpsuits, denied under oath criminal accusations across multiple countries, blasted their critics and described their brash online personas that exude wealth and excess as characters and not their true personalities.

The hearing ended after eight hours without a decision from U.S. Magistrate Lauren Louis, and the brothers headed back to jail.

Prosecutors said the Tates are liars who exaggerate all the time. Assistant U.S. Attorney Abbie Waxman told a judge that Andrew Tate is accused of choking and holding victims and raping them while Tristan Tate is accused of human trafficking, money laundering and violence against minors.

The brothers also face sex crime charges in Romania and prosecutors said they have contacted witnesses in that case and talked about it on video.

"They promote incredible violence against women consistent with the allegations against them," Waxman said.

Andrew Tate maintains his innocence on stand

Andrew Tate said he is innocent, can't work with his Romanian lawyers while in jail in America and fears his absence will mean an unfair life sentence in Eastern Europe.

"If I lose a fair fight I can take it," he said.

Lawyers for the Tates are asking Louis to allow them to be freed from custody at least until an extradition hearing can be held on their U.K. rape and trafficking charges. They have remained in a federal detention

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center in Miami since they were arrested July 18.

Their attorneys argued that their high profile and active social media presence make it nearly impossible for them to flee.

Their lawyers spent more than an hour mostly repeating arguments from court filings that the U.K.'s request was out of line because their criminal case in Romania is going first.

Romanian officials have let them remain free until the proceedings conclude and they have not tried to flee and are complying with all court restrictions.

The judge reminded defense attorneys that she has to follow U.S. laws, but she did ask them to report to her by Monday on what happens if the Tates miss a hearing in Romania.

No date for an extradition hearing has been set. The U.K. has until mid-September to provide evidence to the State Department.

Prosecutors say Tates bragged about wealth and multiple passports

Prosecutors said the brothers appear to have money and have bragged about multiple passports.

The Tates said their claims of wealth are largely exaggerated to boost their social media personas. They said luxury items like the \$50 million yacht or \$2.1 million Aston Martin car seen in their videos don't belong to them.

But prosecutors showed a passport for "Vladimir Scorpius" from Mexico with Tristan Tate's date of birth and photo. They said it has a real Mexican identification number. They also told the judge the brothers have shown no evidence the luxury boat or cars were rented or borrowed.

Tates have long been polarizing online

The Tates have become among the world's most polarizing internet personalities by promoting wealth, male dominance and misogyny through their social media empire.

Andrew Tate, 39, has said women who are sexually assaulted should bear some responsibility for the attacks and shared graphic descriptions of how he might attack women. Tristan Tate, 38, has worked with his brother on multiple businesses, including the production of online webcam pornography.

On his way into court Thursday, defense attorney Joseph McBride told reporters he hasn't heard of a case where the judge has allowed someone out on bail while awaiting an extradition hearing.

But while the odds aren't in their favor, McBride felt like the truth was. He called them innocent, good men who have never run from the law.

Brothers testify they are taken out of context

In court, Tristan Tate was called to the stand Thursday and said he can't prove he is innocent if he is kept in jail.

"I need to clear my name. I need to take part in these proceedings, I can't do that from the secure housing unit," he said.

Both brothers also complained of conditions at the Miami jail. Tristan Tate said there are ants and the only toilet in his cell is where anyone walking by can see him. He said he has lost 14 pounds (6.4 kilograms) eating mostly junk food in the nearly six weeks he has been in custody.

Prosecutors said prisoners are fed three balanced meals a day. They do not have access to scales, and medical records show the brothers have gained a few pounds.

Andrew Tate testified that people are confusing him with a character he plays online. He said people who accuse him of attacking women or supporting human trafficking are taking his comments out of context. "On the internet, you have to shake people out of apathy," he said.

The former professional kickboxers, who have dual U.S. and U.K. citizenship, have millions of social media followers and are vocal supporters of President Donald Trump. The White House has said the brothers shouldn't expect any help from the president.

Ratko Mladic, ex-Bosnian Serb warlord who oversaw atrocities, dies as a prisoner at 84

By JOVANA GEC and DUSAN STOJANOVIC Associated Press

BELGRADE, Serbia (AP) — Ratko Mladic, the bullish Bosnian Serb general whose forces besieged the Bosnian capital for several years in the 1990s and carried out the worst massacre in Europe since World War II, died Thursday while serving a life sentence for his crimes, U.N. officials said. He was 84.

Mladic died at a hospital in The Hague, Netherlands, U.N. court officials said. A Mladic relative who spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the situation confirmed the reports and said Mladic's son, Darko Mladic, was on his way to the Dutch city.

The U.N. tribunal for war crimes committed during the wars in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s sentenced Mladic to life in prison in 2017 in what was considered a key step toward bringing justice to the victims. He had been in custody since 2011 after many years on the run.

The ruthless, blue-eyed former communist officer-turned nationalist warlord was one of the most notorious figures of the conflict that left more than 100,000 people dead and over 1 million homeless. He commanded his troops to "scorch the brains" of the Bosnian Muslims and boasted of being a "Serbian God."

A rise to power

When the ethnic war in Bosnia and Herzegovina started in 1992, Mladic became the commander of the Bosnian Serb troops and took control of large swaths of the country to form a Serb mini-state.

Serbs under Mladic's control laid siege to the Bosnian capital, Sarajevo, and other cities and villages, established concentration camps for detained non-Serb civilians and enemy soldiers, and systematically killed prisoners.

In Sarajevo, Serb troops kept the city isolated while killing civilians with snipers and heavy artillery. In 1995, Mladic's troops slaughtered more than 8,000 Muslim men and boys in Srebrenica — the first case of genocide in Europe since WWII.

But Mladic and his admirers have never repented. He was seen by many as a patriot fighting for the first pan-Serbian state. Defiant, Mladic acted bullishly during his trial and yelled at the judges when sentenced to life in prison.

Munira Subasic, from the Mothers of Srebrenica group, said she had mixed feelings about Mladic's death and deplored that Mladic's crimes are still being denied by many Bosnian Serbs.

"Today, a major war criminal died, the criminal of the Balkans," Subasic said. But while mothers of victims "are still carrying the pain in our souls" 31 years later, "we are still listening to denials, we are still listening to how Ratko Mladic was a hero for the Serbs," she said.

"I am sorry that he died and that he did not suffer for a little while longer, that he didn't wait for more and dream about the eyes of our children," she said.

Residents of Pale, a Bosnian Serb stronghold just outside of Sarajevo, mourned Mladic.

"He was murdered there, in those dungeons," said Janko Seslija, a former Bosnian Serb soldier. "I feel sorry for Gen. Mladic. He was an honorable man, honorable soldier and commander."

Raised on nationalism

Mladic was born March 12, 1942, in the tiny Bosnian village of Bozinovici, in the hills 40 kilometers (25 miles) south of Sarajevo. Like other protagonists in the Yugoslav conflict, he imbibed nationalism from his family's fate in WWII — his own father was killed by Croats.

A communist-era officer, Mladic sided with the Serbs as Yugoslavia disintegrated into war. Mladic first led a Serb insurgency in Croatia before taking over the Bosnian Serb army that was backed by Serbia and then-President Slobodan Milosevic, who also died in the custody of the Hague court in 2006 while on trial for genocide.

Mladic was known for his obsession with his nation's history. He saw Bosnia's war as a chance for revenge against the onetime 500-year-long Ottoman occupation of Serbia. He often referred to Bosnia's Muslims as Turks and boasted of revenge when his troops overran the protected U.N. enclave of Srebrenica in 1995.

Carried away by Serb dominance in firepower and international ignorance, Mladic was convinced of his

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final victory.

"The time has come ... for revenge against Turks in these regions," Mladic said after taking over Srebrenica. Slaughter of civilians

A U.N. "safe haven" for Muslims, Srebrenica ended up overrun by Serbs who separated the men and boys, forced them to strip, killed them and bulldozed their bodies into mass graves in a brutal rampage that lasted for over a week.

The Srebrenica survivors said one image forever will be imprinted in their minds: Mladic handing out candy to Muslim children who had been rounded up on the town's square and reassuring them that everything would be all right — even patting one child on the head.

Convinced of the power of his army, he used to tell his soldiers: "When I give you guarantees, it's as if they are given by God." To clear the way for his helicopter to land, he would tell air traffic controllers: "Here speaks Ratko Mladic — the Serbian God."

Sarajevans still remember his commands to the Serb gunmen pounding the Bosnian capital in early 1992. He issued his orders through a military radio system, not bothering to scramble the signal, which was picked up and taped by the Sarajevo police.

"Turn toward Velesici, there are no Serbs there," Mladic said as he ordered his artillery to pound the Sarajevo suburb.

"Scorch their brains," he told his gunmen.

Life on the run

Faced with the U.N. tribunal's genocide indictment, Mladic in 1996 began his fugitive years in Han Pijesak, a military compound in eastern Bosnia built for Yugoslavia's longtime communist leader, Josip Broz Tito, and designed to withstand a nuclear attack.

With his wife, Bosa, Mladic settled down to imposed domesticity, passing the time caring for bees and goats. His 23 goats reputedly bore the names of foreign dignitaries he despised, such as Madeleine Albright, the former U.S. secretary of state.

Surrounded by security guards, he occasionally ventured out of the dense pine forest to mark events such as the anniversary of the Bosnian Serb army and St. Vitus Day, a religious festival marking the 1389 Serb defeat by the Turks at Kosovo.

When his trail grew too hot in Bosnia in the late 1990s, Mladic moved with family to a villa near the Serbian capital, Belgrade. There, he was seen at his son's wedding, soccer games and fancy restaurants, refusing to give interviews and smiling quizzically when photographed.

When Milosevic was ousted from power in 2000, and Serbia's new pro-democracy authorities signaled they might hand Mladic to the tribunal, tabloids reported he had left Belgrade for Bosnia.

But true to his style, Mladic countered those rumors and others that said he was terminally ill, and before going underground in 2002, he was repeatedly seen driving around the Serbian capital in a Yugo.

Capture and conviction

He completely disappeared from public view in 2008 and was finally arrested in May 2011 in a village near Belgrade where he was hiding at a relative's house.

The frail-looking old man who appeared in court at the Hague was a far cry from the robust image Mladic exuded in wartime. But his defiance was intact.

"Everything you said is pure lies. Shame on you!" he yelled at the U.N. judges when they handed down the conviction.

Already in poor health upon arrest in 2011, Mladic is believed to have suffered multiple strokes during his years on the run and was hospitalized on several occasions while in custody.

Regional powers seek off-ramp from Iran war, and other Middle East developments

By The Associated Press undefined

Qatar and other regional powers sought an off-ramp from the war with Iran on Thursday as another tanker attack was reported in the Strait of Hormuz, and the Iranian government dismissed the Trump administration's latest sanctions.

Elsewhere in the Middle East, Israel continued its attacks on Gaza and Lebanon even as the country's strikes on Gaza drew a sharp rebuke from the top diplomat overseeing the U.S.-brokered ceasefire in the territory.

Here's a look at the latest developments in the Iran war and the wider Middle East. Full coverage can be found here.

Diplomatic efforts by Qatar and Pakistan

Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani was in Tehran on Thursday as part of Qatar's efforts to resolve the conflict between the United States and Iran.

Qatar's Foreign Ministry said in a post on X that Al Thani's meeting with Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi included talks on "the efforts being made to reduce escalation," as well as a proposed plan between Iran and Oman to allow ships safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz and clear the vital commercial waterway of dangerous mines.

Al Thani's office said the prime minister emphasized the "necessity of respecting the sovereignty of neighboring countries and the freedom of navigation" through the strait. He also met Thursday with Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian and its parliamentary speaker, Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf.

Maj. Gen. Mohsen Rezaei, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, underscored the long-standing ties between the two nations, noting that Iran supported Qatar during difficult times. Al Thani said Qatar has never hesitated to cooperate with Iran.

U.S. President Donald Trump told Al Jazeera on Wednesday that he has "no time schedule" to wrap up the conflict that will reach the six-month mark on Friday.

Oil tanker attacked in Strait of Hormuz

The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Organization said Thursday that it had received a report of an oil tanker hit in the Strait of Hormuz.

The monitoring agency, run by the British military, said that local authorities reported that the vessel was hit by an unknown projectile on Tuesday in the waters between Oman and Iran, causing it to catch fire.

The crew was reported to be safe and there have been no reports of environmental damage, the UK-MTO said.

Oil continues to pass through the Strait of Hormuz, albeit well below prewar levels, shipping analysts say.

Ship traffic through the vital waterway increased last week compared with the prior week, with the number of oil and gas carriers up 50%, according to Lloyd's List Intelligence.

The U.S. government has claimed that up to 9 million barrels a day are flowing through the strait "over short time periods," but commodities analysts at ING bank cautioned that the figure "seems aggressive."

Other ship-tracking estimates suggest it's closer to 2 to 6 million barrels per day, ING said. Before the war, some 15 million barrels per day passed through the strait.

Navy Admiral Bradley Cooper, the top U.S. military commander for the Middle East, said Thursday night that international shipping lanes through the Strait of Hormuz have been cleared of mines.

"Today, international shipping lanes are open and momentum is building," he said in a video posted on social media.

Gulf states have not commented on the statement by U.S. Central Command, and it was not possible to independently verify the claim.

Even without mines, however, ships still face threats from drones, missiles and boats as they pass through the narrow waterway.

Iran's Foreign Ministry criticizes US sanctions

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Esmail Baghaei, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson, wrote late Wednesday in a social media post that the U.S. had made a coalition with Bahrain, calling it a country with "virtually no meaningful economic exchange with Iran."

In another social media post on Wednesday, Iran's top negotiator and parliamentary speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf thanked China for rejecting the U.S. "economic D-Day" policies against Iran.

Earlier this week, Tehran had warned that it would respond harshly to expanded U.S. sanctions, including measures against countries it sees as cooperating with Washington.

Syria appoints former SDF leader to political position

Days after the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces announced its dissolution, Syria's interim President Ahmad al-Sharaa appointed the former SDF leader to a position as one of his advisers.

SDF commander Mazloum Abdi on Tuesday announced that the SDF had completed a merger with the Syrian army and would cease to operate as an independent force. The Kurdish-led force, which once controlled the country's northeast, lost most of its territory to a government offensive in January and then signed the deal to merge with the army.

The announcement by al-Sharaa's office of Abdi's appointment came hours after a decree from the education ministry that Kurdish classes would be taught in public and private schools "in areas where Kurdish citizens constitute a significant percentage of the population."

The inclusion of Kurdish as an official language of instruction had been one of Abdi's main demands. Questions remain about the fate of the SDF's all-female fighting units — a sensitive point in the integration talks as many of the Damascus leaders come from a conservative background and are opposed to women in combat.

Meanwhile, U.N. Deputy Special Envoy Claudio Cordone told the U.N. Security Council on Thursday that the Trump administration's decision to lift Syria's designation as a state sponsor of terrorism "should help create more favorable conditions for economic recovery, investment, and broader international engagement with Syria."

Speaking from Damascus, Cordone was critical of Israel's military activity in southern Syria, including house searches and the destruction of private and agricultural property. He expressed concern at statements from senior Israeli officials "advocating an open-ended Israeli military presence in Syrian territory," calling it a violation of the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Russia, France, China and other council members also criticized Israel's attacks in Syria.

Israeli strikes kill 4 in Gaza

In Gaza, Israeli strikes killed four people and left several others wounded, local health officials said.

Three of the victims were killed in separate strikes in Gaza City, officials at Shifa hospital said. The fourth person was killed and others were injured in a strike on a tent sheltering displaced Palestinians in southern Gaza, officials at Nasser hospital said.

Israel's military said the four strikes targeted Hamas militants.

Nickolay Mladenov, head of Trump's Board of Peace, admonished Israel during a United Nations gathering over Israel's continued attacks on Wednesday.

Israel's deputy U.N. ambassador, Noa Furman, told the U.N. Security Council on Wednesday that Israel is committed to Trump's peace plan, but that Hamas' "disarmament must come first."

Dutch diplomats removed from Gaza ceasefire efforts

Israel's Foreign Ministry is removing two Dutch diplomats from the Gaza ceasefire coordination center, the Dutch Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

Israel's Foreign Minister Gideon Saar said that the decision was in response to "a series of anti-Israel measures taken by the Dutch government," including next month's implementation of a ban on the trade of Israeli products from the occupied West Bank and other areas.

Tom Berendsen, the foreign minister of the Netherlands, told The Associated Press in an email that he felt the removal of the diplomats was "unnecessary" but that his country stood by its decision "to ban products from illegal settlements."

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Israeli airstrikes on Lebanon kill 1 woman

Israeli airstrikes in southern Lebanon on Thursday killed one woman and wounded six people, including a child, inside a home, Lebanon's state-run National News Agency said.

The strikes came after Israel blamed the militant Hezbollah group for firing two explosive drones.

The Israeli military said Hezbollah had fired two explosive drones at Israeli troops near the southern city of Nabatiyeh earlier Thursday, though the drones did not inflict any casualties among troops before one was shot down.

Pakistan and Kuwait reach military deal

Pakistan's military announced Thursday that it has agreed to assist Kuwait's military with training, capacity building and border management.

The Pakistani armed forces said the deal was signed by Kuwait's defense minister during a visit to the garrison city of Rawalpindi focused on bilateral defense relations and security cooperation.

Gulf states, long reliant on American protection, have been considering alternative security arrangements in the wake of the war between Iran and the U.S. In early August, Saudi Arabia signed a mutual defense pact with Pakistan and Turkey.

Pakistan said Thursday that it was also continuing diplomatic efforts with Iran, citing a recent visit to Tehran focused on reopening the Strait of Hormuz.

ICE officer's release from Texas jail opens a new front in the escalating fight over extradition

By MICHAEL GONZALEZ, VALERIE GONZALEZ and SUDHIN THANAWALA Associated Press

BROWNSVILLE, Texas (AP) — The release of an Immigration and Customs Enforcement officer from a Texas jail on Thursday despite Minnesota's request for his return could set a dangerous precedent, increasing friction between states and helping criminal defendants avoid justice, legal experts said.

Christian Castro was released from a detention center in Brownsville after Texas Gov. Greg Abbott declined to immediately sign his extradition warrant. A federal judge also declined to block Castro's release or order Abbott to sign the warrant.

Minnesota officials say they believe Castro could flee to Mexico to avoid prosecution on charges he shot a man and lied about it during an immigration crackdown in Minneapolis in January. Extradition from Mexico would require action by the Trump administration, which opened an investigation into Castro's actions but also has argued ICE agents have "absolute immunity" for their actions on duty.

The standoff between the two states is highly unusual. Under federal law, states have little discretion to reject extradition requests from fellow states. Thousands of fugitives are sent to other states each year as a matter of routine.

But Abbott, a Republican, said last week he would not respond to Minnesota's extradition request, citing the ongoing investigation into fraud in government social service programs in the state, which President Donald Trump used to justify his immigration crackdown there.

The decision is alarming because it injects politics into the extradition process, said Marsh Halberg, a criminal defense attorney and former prosecutor in Minnesota.

"Something that's been a routine process may now turn into a political card," he said in a phone interview.

In recent months, California and New York have rejected extradition requests from Louisiana for doctors accused of mailing abortion pills.

But legal scholars say those cases are different because the doctors weren't in Louisiana and never fled the state and became fugitives.

Under federal law, the New York and California governors had no duty to turn over the doctors, Georgetown University law professor Stephen Vladeck wrote on Substack.

"Abbott is just refusing to perform his," he said.

An email to Abbott's office was not immediately returned, but he wrote in a Wednesday post on the social platform X that Minnesota's attorneys did not know the law.

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Castro is charged in Minnesota with assault and falsely reporting a crime in the Jan. 14 shooting of 24-year-old Julio Cesar Sosa-Celis. Prosecutors in Hennepin County, where the county attorney is a Democrat, say he fired a gun through the front door of a Minneapolis home, shooting Sosa-Celis in the leg, and then falsely accused Sosa-Celis and another man of attacking an ICE officer with a broom handle and a snow shovel.

The Department of Homeland Security said in a statement that "the officer in question has been suspended without pay" while the U.S. Attorney's Office investigates statements by officers involved in the Minneapolis altercation.

"Upon conclusion of the investigation, the officers may face disciplinary action, including termination of employment, as well as potential criminal prosecution," the DHS statement said.

After a Minnesota judge issued a nationwide warrant for Castro's arrest in May, authorities, including Minnesota's Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, arrested him in Texas' Cameron County on May 29. Minnesota authorities have sought his extradition since then, but he remained in custody in Brownsville, a city bordering Mexico.

Under Texas law and barring extradition, Castro had to be released Thursday after 90 days in detention. Though he is free, he remains a fugitive subject to arrest in Minnesota and other states.

Abbott has exposed one of several loopholes in extradition laws that are likely to lead to more conflict between states in the future, said Ethan Lowens, a fellow at the University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School.

Texas attorneys have argued that Abbott's extradition decision is still pending, as he awaits the outcome of an internal state investigation considering whether Castro was legally a fugitive.

U.S. District Judge Fernando Rodriguez Jr. wrote Wednesday that the court couldn't intervene without a final decision by Abbott. Minnesota had asked him to compel Castro's extradition.

Lowens said other governors could make similar arguments to avoid extradition requests they oppose. As states diverge on laws over abortion, gender-affirming care and other issues, he said he expects such extradition conflicts to "come up more and more."

Congo begins vaccinations to fight the fastest-growing Ebola outbreak in history

KISANGANI, Congo (AP) — Congo on Thursday began vaccinating people against Ebola as health authorities work to slow the fastest-growing outbreak of the disease in history.

Health workers and other frontline workers in the Ebola response are being prioritized to receive the Ervebo vaccine that was effective in past Ebola outbreaks caused by a different, more common type. Clinical trials are going on to find a licensed vaccine for the current outbreak.

"We have decided to use the Ervebo vaccine to protect first those who are on the front line," Health Minister Roger Kamba said at the launch of the vaccination campaign in Kisangani, the capital of Tshopo, which is one of the six provinces affected by Ebola in the east.

As of Tuesday, the country had recorded 5,713 confirmed cases, including 2,744 deaths, according to government figures. It is concentrated in Ituri province and is known to be the deadliest of all past 17 Ebola outbreaks in the country.

The outbreak is spreading under extremely difficult conditions, fueled by insecurity, displacement, a health workers' strike and intense population movements. The World Health Organization has said it remains out of control and is on track to surpass the 2014-2016 West Africa Ebola outbreak, the deadliest on record, which killed more than 11,000 people, primarily in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

More than 50,000 doses of the Ervebo vaccine have been received, according to Congo's state news agency.

The World Health Organization said last week that 70,000 doses of Ervebo had been approved for use in Congo.

About 50,000 doses are intended for frontline and health workers, while 20,000 doses will be used in a

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clinical trial to study whether the vaccine protects against Bundibugyo virus, which is causing the current outbreak and has no licensed vaccine nor treatment.

The vaccine is being used under a compassionate-use program, which allows a medical product to be used in a serious disease situation even though it has not been specifically approved for that particular use.

Health authorities said Ervebo could offer some protection against the Bundibugyo virus because the two viruses are related. But whether the vaccine can actually prevent illness in people infected with Bundibugyo Ebola is still being studied.

Placide Mbala Kingebezi, Africa CDC's director for research, clinical trials and innovation, said data will be collected during the vaccination campaign to measure how well the vaccine works.

The campaign is expected to cover 14 health zones in Tshopo, Bas-Uele and Haut-Uele provinces.

Kamba strongly encouraged health workers to get vaccinated, saying the vaccine could protect them from the disease and help prevent them from carrying the virus into their communities.

As super El Nino strengthens, study suggests that climate change is intensifying El Ninos

By SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — A new study suggests that El Ninos — the natural climatic chaos agent that pops up periodically and spikes global temperatures — are getting stronger because of human-caused climate change.

El Ninos are more than 36% stronger than they were before the industrial age began in the mid 1800s, with a 16% jump in just the last 40 years showing that the increase is accelerating, according to a study in Thursday's journal Science. The findings come as a strong El Nino that formed a couple months ago is forecast to be the biggest on record in coming months. El Ninos, which are a temporary warming of parts of the equatorial Pacific, warp weather worldwide and increase extreme events, including heat waves, floods in some places and droughts in others. They can cost trillions in damage.

"That's important because strong El Ninos have much stronger impacts on climate hazards and extremes worldwide. When we set out to answer the question of why this might be happening, we set our data up against a record of global temperature, and we found that the increase in El Nino's strength closely parallels the rise in global temperature that is due to human causes such as the burning of fossil fuels," said study lead author Julia Cole, a paleoclimate scientist at the University of Michigan.

Her study looks back at El Ninos going back 900 years or so.

Aggravating already nasty El Ninos

"El Nino is the most violent aspect of climate variability worldwide, with effects ranging from local fisheries collapse, to widespread coral die-offs to severe droughts and food shortages around the world," said Dalhousie University marine scientist Boris Worm, who wasn't part of the study.

Worm quoted the late climate scientist Wallace Broecker who warned "the climate system is an angry beast and we are poking it with sticks." And then Worm added: "Human emissions are the stick and El Nino is of the 'angry' outbursts that can be so threatening to our collective safety."

An El Nino's strength is determined by measuring water temperature in a region of the central Pacific around the equator and comparing a three-month average to normal. If it's 0.5 degrees Celsius (0.9 degrees Fahrenheit) warmer than normal, it's becomes an El Nino. The top of the scale is 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) and is called "very strong." The most recent weekly El Nino figure is at 2.7 degrees (4.9 degrees Fahrenheit) and is expected to keep growing for another two to four months, according to Columbia University's El Nino tracker.

Scientists have long theorized that as the world warms, El Ninos would get stronger because they are based on ocean temperature differences compared to average. But observational records only goes back about 75 years, so scientists have previously said the data is too spotty for a trend. So scientists have looked for clues that indicate an El Nino without measuring water temperatures directly. Scientists, for example, have looked back at historical records of changes in weather around the world and figured out

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past El Ninos — such as the super-sized one in 1877 — due to the changes they cause across the globe.

Using coral fossils to study temperature

Cole's team took a novel approach by looking at what happened to coral over the centuries to act as "a time machine to look into the past," she said. Cole said measurements of the ratio of calcium and strontium in coral skeletons and of different oxygen isotopes create two independent readings of the seawater in which the coral formed. Another measurement of uranium and thorium tell when those skeletons were formed.

Cole looked at 29 coral fossils in the Galapagos Islands — 14 from before the industrial era, 14 after the modern era began and one more from about the time the industrial era was starting up. The oldest was from around year 1100.

The temperatures she derived from the fossils over more than 900 years are patchy, with gaps, but when charted it, she said it looks like a hockey stick, the same description used for a 1990s landmark study of past global temperatures.

She and other scientists say it's only going to get worse.

"It raises the specter of a future where larger El Niño and La Niña events are dialing up the pace and severity of weather and climate extremes," said Kim Cobb, a coral and climate scientist at Brown University, who wasn't part of the study.

Outside scientists split on the research

Outside scientists are split on the research with some hailing it as important and trustworthy and others saying they don't buy it because it clashes with some recent observations.

"Corals are the gold standard for El Niño reconstruction, and this brings a goldmine of new material to the table," Cobb said. "We can either wait many many decades for the instrumental record to get long enough to detect a shift in El Niño properties, or we can use centuries of El Niño reconstructions provided by paleoclimate records. Taken together, the paleoclimate data that we have, from across the Pacific, is fairly consistent in pointing to an intensification of El Niño's with global warming."

Both University of Pennsylvania climate scientist Michael Mann — originator of the temperature hockey stick — and University of North Carolina marine scientist John Bruno said that the coral data conflicts with recent observations of water temperature in the Galapagos. Data shows "a substantial decline in recent decades" of El Nino related variations near the Galapagos during the time greenhouse gases increased temperatures the most, Mann said.

What's being reflected by the coral is not a change in El Nino as much as the warming from greenhouse gases, Bruno said.

Cole said the huge 1997-1998 El Nino and then small ones until 2023-24 created a situation where it seems like El Nino's aren't strengthening because measurements are based on a 20-year time period and there were a few years that fell between super El Ninos that skewed data. She said El Nino varies in strength so much and that up-and-down nature doesn't go away just because it is responding to warmer conditions.

But the scientists all agreed that climate change is a problem, with or without El Nino worsening.

"It's important to point to this as one more reason why we need to get off fossil fuels," Cole said. "There isn't a magic bullet that's going to slow El Ninos down."

Trump signs order renaming Lake Ontario as 'Lake America' in the United States

By MICHELLE L. PRICE and WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump said Thursday he is renaming Lake Ontario to be known as "Lake America" in the United States as he escalates his trade war with Canada.

The Republican president signed an executive order directing the Interior Department to update the lake's name in the U.S. geographic naming service. Trump cannot force Canada to follow along, however.

Trump has been floating the idea of the name change in recent days as the U.S. announced it was imposing 50% tariffs on \$20 billion worth of Canadian goods over the weekend after talks between the

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countries broke down. Trump has been needling America's northern neighbor since he returned to the White House last year, suggesting the ally with whom the U.S. once had warm relations should instead be absorbed as the 51st state.

Canada responded to Trump's import taxes this week by imposing retaliatory tariffs on \$20 billion worth of American goods, including steel, dairy products, appliances and farm equipment.

Trump, who signed the order as he was sitting at the Resolute Desk in the Oval Office, had a large sign behind him propped on a stand with a map of the Great Lakes. Over Lake Ontario, in big red letters, the map read "Lake America."

On the other side of the president was another map with the words, "MAKING THE GREAT LAKES EVEN GREATER."

Trump said as he was signing the order that he'd "notified all of the various people that we have to notify. So, we've done everything that you have to do."

"And this is official, effective immediately," he added.

But the executive order Trump signed shows that the changes are supposed to be made within 30 days.

Canadian officials dismissed Trump's move.

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney rejected the move, invoking the lake's Indigenous roots and noting that the name predates both Canadian Confederation and the U.S. Declaration of Independence.

"Canadians also know that naming reality means calling it Lake Ontario — then, now and always," he wrote.

Ontario Premier Doug Ford, who has traded insults with Trump, said on X: "It's Lake Ontario to Canadians and the rest of the world. Now and forever."

Nova Scotia Premier Tim Houston said, "We're into some real foolishness now. It's Lake Ontario, buddy."

The lake is one of multiple Great Lakes that the U.S. and Canada share borders along. New York Gov. Kathy Hochul, a Democrat whose state shares a border on the lake, wrote on X in response to the White House's announcement that, "New York won't be calling it that."

There is no single international body that determines names of international bodies of water and Trump has wide latitude over how the U.S. government recognizes geographic places and landmarks.

The name Lake Ontario comes from the Huron Indigenous people's word "oniatari:io," which means "lake of shining waters." The province of Ontario, founded in 1867, took its name from the lake.

Trump said that while his action was not meant to send any particular geopolitical message, "Canada's been ripping us off for a long time" on trade and military issues.

"They wanted to be treated like a state and they're not a state," the president said. "We just can't do that anymore."

"We love the people of Canada," Trump added. "I don't think their representatives do, an appropriate job. Maybe they'll change. I really don't know. It doesn't make much difference."

The move is reminiscent of his move last year to rename the Gulf of Mexico as the "Gulf of America."

Trump scribbled his name with a Sharpie pen on the executive order, then held it up for the cameras, offering, "And we filed all the necessary papers, documents, everything else."

He also suggested his push to rename bodies of water may not be finished.

"So, if you think about it, we have a gulf and we have a lake. Now, all we need is an ocean," Trump said. "So maybe we'll have to change the name of the Atlantic and/or the Pacific. Maybe we'll change them."

As midterm elections approach, Republican candidates weigh how closely to align with Trump

By STEVE PEOPLES and JILL COLVIN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — "AIR FORCE VETERAN. SMALL BUSINESSMAN. TRUMP CONSERVATIVE."

The all-caps headline on Texas Republican congressional candidate Carlos De La Cruz's website used to align him with President Donald Trump. Not anymore.

"NATIVE TEXAN. AIR FORCE VETERAN. SMALL BUSINESSMAN. PROVEN CONSERVATIVE," it reads now.

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De La Cruz's campaign rejected any suggestion he was backing away from the president, whose knack for mobilizing his loyalists remains critical for Republicans in this fall's midterm elections. The overwhelming majority of Republicans on the ballot this fall are embracing Trump despite his dismal approval ratings, an unpopular war with Iran and lingering inflation.

However, as the two-month sprint to Election Day begins, a small collection of Republican candidates have quietly begun to distance themselves in subtle ways from Trump now that they've won contested primaries in which his endorsement was often the most coveted prize. The shift is easy to miss, often only a few words or new pictures. And Republicans insist there is no shift at all.

Mike Marinella, a spokesman for the National Republican Congressional Committee, called it a "manufactured storyline."

"President Trump and House Republicans have delivered historic results for the American people, and our candidates are eager to take that record directly to voters alongside the President on the campaign trail," he said.

But from California to Texas and Kentucky to Alaska, candidates in recent weeks have tweaked their campaign messaging to downplay their connection to Trump. A handful of others have highlighted their opposition to his policies.

It's an extremely delicate balance for vulnerable Republican candidates, who must expand their appeal beyond Trump's MAGA base to win in the general election this fall, but are also afraid to trigger a backlash from Trump or his hard core supporters if they create too much distance.

Trump's unpopularity could weigh down his party

Most candidates are still wrapping their arms around Trump.

Republican allies of the president argue there is little upside for candidates to turn away from Trump, despite his weak polling numbers. Democrats will try to cast every Republican running as a Trump acolyte, regardless of their actual stances, they said, and midterm successes typically depend on turning out base voters. Trump remains the Republican Party's best motivator.

"The whole Republican brand is that we're aligned with Trump so you gain nothing from it," said Jason Roe, a Republican who advises Rep. Tom Barrett, who is fighting for reelection in a competitive mid-Michigan district race.

It is typical for candidates from both sides to tweak their messages after primary elections. Some Democrats, for example, have begun pitching themselves as moderates after highlighting endorsements from progressives like Sen. Bernie Sanders during their primaries.

Still, the slight shift among at least a half-dozen Republican congressional candidates could signal the beginning of a more significant move within the party as the weight of Trump's unpopularity with the general public comes into view at a critical moment. Just 33% of adults approve of Trump's job performance, according to Associated Press-NORC polling from July. And Trump gets relatively poor ratings on his handling of the economy, immigration and foreign policy.

Meanwhile, Trump will not make it easy for vulnerable Republicans to avoid him. As voters typically begin paying much closer attention to politics after Labor Day, the president will headline a two-day Republican convention in Dallas as he urges voters to act as if he were on the ballot.

"The problem that we have is they say that Trump does great when he's on the ballot, but when he's not on the ballot, his people don't come," Trump said as he recently stumped in South Carolina.

"So what I really want you to do is pretend, please, that I'm on the ballot," he went on. "Just say that I'm on the ballot one more time."

Shifting emphasis moving into the general election

A number of Republicans have removed or downplayed references to Trump from their websites after winning their primaries.

Eric Flores, a former assistant U.S. Attorney and Texas Army National Guard infantry captain running against Democratic Rep. Vicente Gonzalez Jr. in South Texas, once featured "SUPPORT PRESIDENT TRUMP'S AGENDA" as No. 2 in his list of priorities on his campaign homepage.

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That item has now been replaced with "LOWER THE COST OF LIVING," a top issue for voters. Trump does not appear anywhere else on the website, aside from a list of endorsements that previously appeared on the homepage but has been moved to a separate page.

Flores' campaign declined to comment.

In Kentucky, Ralph Alvarado, running to represent the overwhelmingly Republican 6th Congressional District, removed all references to Trump from his campaign homepage, as well as a photo of the two of them together after winning his primary in May. He now promises to offer "INDEPENDENT LEADERSHIP" after previously running as an "AMERICA FIRST FIGHTER."

NBC News first reported the changes to Alvarado's website. Campaign manager Andy Westberry noted Trump's photo still appears elsewhere in a media gallery. "The socialists are going to have to do a lot better than this nonsense to win this district," he said in a statement.

Some changes do not mean Trump has been erased.

While De La Cruz no longer touts himself as a "TRUMP CONSERVATIVE" at the top of his homepage, a video that is embedded lower down features the Air Force veteran speaking at a Trump rally.

He still calls himself a "TEXAS TRUMP CONSERVATIVE" on his bio page and lists "Supporting President Trump's America First Agenda" as among his priorities on a "Mission" page.

But the bio section has also been tweaked. It once described him as "ready to be President Trump's wingman in Congress." That section now says he is running because he "believes America needs more servant leaders and fewer corrupt politicians" and "because he's not finished serving the country he loves."

De La Cruz campaign manager Jordan Pawlicki said in a statement that, during the primary, several candidates were claiming the president's endorsement, so the campaign "put it front and center."

"Carlos is honored to have President Trump's support, which is why the President is featured prominently across our website," Pawlicki said.

Republicans downplay any changes to their messaging

In Nevada, Republican congressional candidate Marty O'Donnell's website featured Trump prominently in June. The very first thing visitors saw was a pop-up with a large picture of Trump and a smiling O'Donnell standing side by side. The words "President Trump endorsed Marty O'Donnell" were written beneath the image.

Two months later, the photo does not appear on the website. O'Donnell's campaign said the photo was not intentionally removed; the change was simply the standard rotation of the "splash page."

O'Donnell adviser Keith Schipper noted that O'Donnell, a music composer best known for his work on the "Halo" video game series, has not deviated from his steadfast support for Trump.

"Republicans are embracing President Trump on the campaign trail because they know he is the key to getting his voters out in November," Schipper said. "The president has delivered on the agenda he promised voters in 2024 and Republicans are smartly using it to win this year."

There was another subtle shift in Alaska's House race, where Republican Rep. Nick Begich is running for reelection.

In June, he highlighted his relationship to Trump on the homepage of his website: "Alongside President Trump, we have made great gains for Alaska, putting us on a path to self-determination and generational success."

This week, nothing in that section has been changed, except for the opening line that previously mentioned Trump. Now, that line reads, "We have delivered for Alaska, putting us on a path to self-determination and generational success."

Begich's campaign did not respond to a request for comment.

Some are emphasizing their independence

Rep. Mike Lawler, a New York Republican who represents a district carried by Kamala Harris in the last election, appeared on stage with the president during a rally in his district just three months ago. But does he want Trump to return before Election Day?

"If he comes back, that's fine, but ultimately this race is going to be decided by my record and my vision," Lawler said in an interview.

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Lawler supported Trump's so-called "big, beautiful bill," but he's quick to highlight policy differences, especially on taxes. Trump does not appear on Lawler's campaign website.

On Thursday, Tom Tiffany, the Republican candidate for governor in Wisconsin who is closely aligned with Trump, publicly criticized the president's decision to sign an order renaming Lake Ontario "Lake America" as part of his trade war with Canada.

"I believe the Great Lakes are the Great Lakes and should stay Lake Superior, Lake Michigan, Lake Ontario," he said, according to the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.

Earlier this week, he came out against Trump's plan to import cheaper ground beef in an effort to reduce prices.

Others want distance from Trump's unpopular war with Iran.

In Michigan, Rep. Barrett, who flipped a Lansing-area district two years ago, has been highlighting his vote against Trump's war in Iran on the campaign trail as he competes against William Lawrence, a self-described democratic socialist.

Barrett this year has repeatedly broken ranks with Republicans to join Democrats in voting for the War Powers Resolution to rein in Trump's military campaign in Iran. And he has been promoting those votes, promoting a recent town hall with constituents, by saying he would "be having a discussion about the War Powers Act and my efforts to place congressional limits on the war in Iran."

Roe, the Republican who advises Barrett, said the vote was not about some major break from Trump but a difference over a policy-specific issue. Barrett served in the U.S. Army for over two decades.

"He's willing to be at odds with the White House on this issue," Roe said. "It's important to him."

Tropical Storms Karina and Lowell form in the Pacific Ocean as Dolly churns in the Atlantic

MIAMI (AP) — Tropical Storms Karina and Lowell formed Thursday in the Pacific Ocean, both of which were expected to become hurricanes in the next few days, the National Hurricane Center said.

Tropical Storm Karina was located about 825 miles (1,330 kilometers) south of the southern tip of Baja California, with maximum sustained winds of around 45 mph (75 kph), according to an advisory from the Miami-based hurricane center. Tropical Storm Lowell was about 1,765 miles (2,840 kilometers) west-southwest of the tip of Baja California, with maximum sustained winds of around 40 mph (65 kph).

There were no coastal watches or warnings in effect for either storm, though the hurricane center warned swells from Karina could bring life-threatening surf and rip currents to portions of southwest Mexico and the Baja California Peninsula over the weekend.

Earlier Thursday, Tropical Storm Dolly formed in the Atlantic Ocean far from land, and forecasters said it could bring heavy rain to portions of the Caribbean.

The storm was about 1,555 miles (2,500 kilometers) east of the Leeward Islands and had maximum sustained winds of 40 mph (64 kph), the U.S. National Hurricane Center in Miami said. Dolly was moving west.

The storm and its name had no connection to Dolly Parton's death Tuesday.

Storm systems are named by procedures set by the World Meteorological Organization, and the lists of names are reused every six years. For the Atlantic region, the lists are alphabetical and alternate male and female names.

Dolly was the fourth named storm for the 2026 Atlantic hurricane season.

There were no coastal watches or warnings in effect, but the center said the Leeward Islands could get heavy rain Saturday and Sunday. The Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico and Hispaniola could see heavy rain Sunday and Monday.

Little change in strength is forecast during the coming days, the center said, but flash flooding could occur.

The Atlantic hurricane season started with Tropical Storm Arthur coming ashore on the U.S. Gulf Coast in June, and Tropical Storm Bertha dumped rain in Louisiana and Texas in July. Tropical Storm Cristobal formed and quickly dissipated in the Atlantic earlier in August.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has forecast a below-average Atlantic hurricane

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season due to El Nino. It forecast eight to 14 named storms, with three to six of them reaching hurricane strength and one to three of those intensifying to major hurricanes.

The NHC and other weather agencies name storms to easily communicate warnings about them to people and to avoid confusion. The WMO says names are chosen to be short, easy to pronounce and familiar to the regions of the world where the storm names are used. It meets regularly to evaluate potential names, and some names are retired for reasons of sensitivity, particularly for deadly or destructive storms.

One name from the 2025 season was retired, Melissa, which was a Category 5 hurricane that brought devastation to the Caribbean.

UEFA prepares criminal complaint in Swiss courts against FIFA's Infantino over World Cup sell-off

By GRAHAM DUNBAR AP Sports Writer

MONACO (AP) — UEFA is preparing a criminal complaint against FIFA President Gianni Infantino in Swiss courts for possible financial mismanagement over his failed plan to sell future World Cup profits to private investors.

The governing body of European soccer announced its intentions in court documents filed Thursday in the U.S. seeking access to possible evidence related to the sell-off plan, which was withdrawn after a furious backlash by UEFA and other global soccer leaders.

The move increases the pressure on Infantino, who is facing the biggest crisis in his 10 years as FIFA's leader.

UEFA filed documents in a Manhattan court requesting discovery of potential evidence from the New York investment fund, Thrive Capital Management, founded by Josh Kushner — the younger brother of President Donald Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner.

UEFA also filed a request in a southern Florida district for authorization of discovery "in a foreign proceeding" against FIFA itself, which has offices in the Miami suburb of Coral Gables.

Under the plan revealed in late July, Thrive and Kushner were to be the anchor investors intending to pay FIFA \$4.2 billion for a 20% stake in a subsidiary that would run the soccer body's commercial events, including the World Cup.

"UEFA and its counsel are contemplating a Swiss criminal proceeding against Infantino and possibly other FIFA officials for criminal mismanagement under Article 158 of the Swiss Criminal Code," UEFA's lawyers state in a 56-page document seen by The Associated Press.

The document suggests the \$4.2 billion figure could be a "fraudulently off-market price promoted by Infantino for his own benefit."

FIFA is expected to have about \$5 billion in cash reserves after the World Cup in North America boosted its revenue to a record \$15 billion over the 2023-26 commercial cycle.

"The question is therefore why the FIFA president believed he needed outside investors to expand development funding," UEFA said in a statement.

Infantino dropped the sell-off plan on Aug. 1 after intense criticism led by soccer officials in Europe.

UEFA had warned against destroying potential evidence

UEFA first threatened to take legal action on Aug. 3 when it warned FIFA against destroying or hiding any "relevant materials" related to the plan. Thursday's legal move was revealed to its member federations in Monaco just two hours before the Champions League draw began.

"Infantino claimed that the plan would 'unleash the commercial potential and opportunity that FIFA has,'" UEFA lawyers told the courts. "In truth, it was a vehicle for Infantino and that small circle to acquire a permanent stake in and otherwise profit from FIFA's most valuable assets to the detriment of FIFA, its members, and other parties within the football family.

"Under the terms Infantino announced, those investors stood to acquire a permanent financial interest in FIFA's commercial arm for \$4.2 billion, implying an absurdly low enterprise value of only approximately \$20 billion, a figure that was neither the product of an open, competitive auction, nor tested by any in-

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dependent valuer.”

Thrive declined to comment. FIFA was approached for comment.

Swiss prosecutors’ poor results in FIFA trials

It was unclear if UEFA would send a potential criminal complaint to the Swiss federal prosecution office in Bern or to local prosecutors in FIFA’s home city Zurich.

The Swiss attorney general’s office has a poor record in recent years prosecuting cases of alleged corruption linked to FIFA and soccer officials.

Former FIFA president Sepp Blatter, former UEFA president Michel Platini and the influential Qatari president of Champions League title holder Paris Saint-Germain, Nasser al-Khelaifi, all were acquitted twice at trials in Switzerland.

UEFA committed to replacing Infantino

The crisis has raised questions about Infantino’s future. Just months ago, he was widely expected to win another four-year term in the FIFA election set for March 2027, but a growing number of soccer federations around the world but mainly in Europe have withdrawn their support, with some joining UEFA in calling on him to step down, ideally before the Nov. 18 deadline for candidates.

“Should the current FIFA president nevertheless seek another mandate, UEFA will join forces with its partner confederations to ensure that member associations are offered a credible alternative,” the European body said, “one committed to integrity, accountability, development and genuine institutional change.”

Exclusive: RFK Jr. said a Samoa trip had nothing to do with vaccines. New documents refute that

By ALI SWENSON Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. repeatedly told lawmakers who held the key to his confirmation last year that a 2019 visit to Samoa before a deadly measles outbreak had “nothing to do with vaccines.” New documents obtained by The Associated Press and The Guardian refute that testimony.

Kennedy, then a prominent anti-vaccine activist, preceded the visit with a letter to the Samoan prime minister requesting to study the Pacific island nation’s measles, mumps and rubella vaccines after the deaths of two children who had received them. In the letter, he used the words vaccine or vaccination eight times.

The letter raises questions about how truthful Kennedy was in testimony before Congress. During an arduous confirmation process where he needed the support of some skeptical Republican lawmakers to advance, Kennedy also pledged to maintain vaccine policies that, once in office, he moved to change.

“I am writing this letter to you in the hope that we might be helpful to the people of your great nation,” Kennedy wrote, adding that he believed the deaths of the two children could have resulted from manufacturing issues.

“I would propose my team conduct detailed health informatics assessment in Samoa of what happened with your MMR vaccines,” he continued.

The Department of Health and Human Services said in response to questions from the AP that the Samoa visit “was unrelated to vaccines.”

“Any claim or insinuation based on these letters that Secretary Kennedy lied under oath or to Congress is not only false but outright defamatory,” the department said in a statement. Kennedy was not under oath during his confirmation hearing. Knowingly giving material false testimony to Congress is a crime that carries a possible prison sentence regardless of whether a person is under oath, though it is rarely prosecuted.

HHS did not make Kennedy available for an interview. The White House did not respond to a request for comment. The Samoan prime minister’s office and the former prime minister who corresponded with Kennedy did not respond to requests for comment.

Kennedy’s Samoa visit has become one of the most contentious events in his career. At the time, he was leading a nonprofit known for its anti-vaccine activism. Critics said the visit fueled anti-vaccine sentiment

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in Samoa, which later experienced the measles outbreak that killed 83 people, mostly children under 5. Attorneys said lawmakers could use Kennedy's statements as grounds for hearings, investigations or an impeachment inquiry. But such action is unlikely under the current Republican-led Congress, which is aligned with President Donald Trump's administration.

Massachusetts Sen. Edward Markey and Oregon Sen. Ron Wyden, both Democrats who questioned Kennedy about Samoa in his confirmation hearings, accused the health secretary of lying.

Wyden, the top Democrat on the Senate Finance Committee, said he will press Republicans to refer the case to the Justice Department, and pledged to hold Kennedy accountable if Democrats retake the Senate in fall elections.

"There are consequences for lying to Congress," he said.

Under repeated questioning, Kennedy insisted vaccines weren't the reason for the trip

At the start of Trump's second term, Kennedy — then a leader in the anti-vaccine movement — faced an uphill battle to become the nation's health secretary. Lawmakers from both parties had criticized his anti-vaccine rhetoric, and in confirmation hearings, he tried to assure them that he supported childhood vaccination.

The Samoa trip also came under scrutiny.

Kennedy told the senators that his Samoa visit didn't influence people's decisions on whether to vaccinate. Several times, he flatly denied that his reason for the trip had anything to do with vaccines.

When it came up during Wyden's questioning, Kennedy replied: "I went there, nothing to do with vaccines. I went there to introduce a medical informatics system that would digitalize records in Samoa and make health delivery much more efficient."

The following day, when Markey asked, Kennedy said: "My purpose in going down there had nothing to do with vaccines."

Upon further questioning, Kennedy again denied it had anything to do with vaccines before adding: "My purpose in the trip was not to — I ended up having conversations with people, some of whom I never intended to meet."

In the end, Kennedy won crucial support from Republican Sen. Bill Cassidy, the Louisiana physician who leads the Senate health committee and strongly advocates vaccination. The Senate confirmed Kennedy on a 52-48 vote.

Cassidy said he voted to confirm Kennedy because Kennedy promised not to change certain vaccine policies and guidance. For example, Cassidy said when announcing his vote, Kennedy pledged to maintain a vaccine advisory committee "without changes." In office, Kennedy ousted all 17 members of the committee and named his own advisers.

Cassidy has acknowledged his trust in Kennedy was broken.

"The commitments that were made to me have been violated," Cassidy said on CBS's "Face the Nation" in June.

Letters show Kennedy wanted to study Samoa's use of MMR vaccine

Kennedy for years was chair and chief legal counsel of Children's Health Defense, a nonprofit group known for its anti-vaccine activism. The group turned its attention to Samoa in July 2018, when two young children died after receiving a tainted MMR vaccine that had been improperly prepared. The two nurses involved were criminally charged the following month. The nurses ultimately pleaded guilty to manslaughter.

The Samoan government halted all vaccinations for 10 months, until April 2019. Vaccination rates plummeted.

During that time, CHD started contacting the Samoan government, according to emails previously obtained by the AP and the Guardian through a lawsuit against the State Department brought with the aid of the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press.

In the newly obtained letter from Kennedy, also revealed through the lawsuit and dated Jan. 20, 2019, he addressed then-Prime Minister Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi and described his desire to study Samoa's use of the MMR vaccine.

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Kennedy speculated that the deaths in Samoa may have been caused by issues with different vaccine lots. Writing on CHD letterhead, he said his team wanted to evaluate whether that was the case through a "detailed health informatics assessment."

He expressed his belief that it was difficult and time-consuming in most of the world to investigate "adverse health events associated with vaccines" and said health information systems are rarely designed to quickly study links "between diagnoses and specific vaccination events."

The letter did not specifically discuss anti-vaccine activism.

The prime minister responded a month later, saying Samoa could benefit from CHD's assessment.

"It is certainly beneficial for Samoa to have the benefit of your Team's independent health assessment of our MMR Vaccines and I would welcome with much anticipation your Team's proposed visit to our islands," he wrote.

CHD did not respond to a request for comment.

Kennedy, his wife, actor Cheryl Hines, and Michael Graven, a CHD colleague, took their trip to Samoa in May and June of that year. By then, vaccinations had resumed and Samoa's top health official had announced that human error, not a vaccine issue, caused the children's deaths.

While in Samoa, Kennedy met with anti-vaccine activists, including one who helped arrange the trip with a U.S. Embassy employee, the AP and the Guardian previously reported.

Months later, with vaccination rates still dangerously low, measles broke out, sickening thousands.

Public health experts have said their efforts to address the outbreak were hampered by anti-vaccine activists, some of whom they claim were emboldened by Kennedy's visit.

The AP and the Guardian previously reported that State Department and UNICEF officials privately discussed that the trip was about vaccines.

Exclusive: US Patriot missile stocks in Europe are 'beyond critical' due to Iran war, officials say

By EMMA BURROWS and BEN FINLEY Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. military is experiencing a "beyond critical" shortage of advanced missile interceptors in Europe largely driven by President Donald Trump's war with Iran, a U.S. defense official in Europe and a NATO official told The Associated Press, raising concerns about vulnerabilities in NATO countries to a potential Russian attack.

The U.S. defense official said the most concerning shortfall involves Patriot missile interceptors, which can shoot down Russia's high-speed ballistic missiles. The NATO official confirmed the low inventories of Patriots among American and NATO forces in Europe. Both spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive military matters.

In the event of a Russian ballistic missile assault on, for example, a military headquarters or power plant, NATO could be in a similar position to Patriot-starved Ukraine and be forced "to take punch after punch in the mouth," the U.S. defense official said.

In Europe, the American military "definitely" does not have enough Patriots to stop any possible sustained ballistic missile attack and would have "very limited" capability to defend against a single ballistic missile strike or a stray Russian missile that goes off course, the U.S. official said.

It illustrates the cascading fallout from Trump's decision to launch a war against Iran, a conflict that reaches the six-month mark on Friday. U.S. missile stocks in Europe have been moved to the Middle East, where U.S. and Gulf allies have fired off significant numbers of interceptors, including Patriots, to thwart Iran's drones and missiles. Some of those attacks have killed and wounded American troops.

Though a Russian ballistic missile attack against NATO countries is not imminently expected, CIA Director John Ratcliffe went to Moscow this week to warn Russia not to attack, The Wall Street Journal reported.

Asked by reporters Thursday whether Ratcliffe delivered that message to Russian President Vladimir Putin, Trump offered a roundabout response.

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"I don't want to comment on that, but they're not going to attack," Trump said.

European and NATO officials say Russia could be in a position to attack countries in the alliance by 2030. Patriot stockpiles are projected to rebound by then. In the meantime, Russia's war in Ukraine could hinder its ability to carry out any missile attack on Europe as it would be a challenge for Moscow to fight an air war on two fronts.

US Patriot transfers to Ukraine played a role in the drawdown, but the Iran war wasn't expected

U.S. Army Col. Martin O'Donnell, a senior NATO military spokesperson, said it is "simply not the case" that the number of Patriot missiles in Europe is beyond critical.

NATO, he said, is able to "block punches" and has enough air defense munitions available to defend itself as well as to donate to Ukraine.

Chief Pentagon spokesman Sean Parnell said in a statement Thursday that claims of U.S. munition shortages "are false."

"We have everything required to strike at the time and place of the President's choosing," Parnell said.

"Across multiple combatant commands, we have already executed successful operations while maintaining a deep, ready arsenal to defend our people and our interests."

Officials in Ukraine, however, are begging for more Patriots to defend against Russian missile attacks, while previous U.S. transfers to Ukraine have drawn down some of the American supply of the interceptors.

Kyiv says only U.S.-made Patriots can stop Russia's advanced ballistic missiles, which increasingly are getting through Ukrainian defenses, including as part of a barrage overnight into Thursday.

The U.S. supplied hundreds of Patriot missiles to Ukraine over the course of the 4 1/2-year-long conflict, but the Iran war was the tipping point for shrinking inventories, said Ed Arnold, senior associate fellow at the Royal United Services Institute, a military think tank in London.

The supply to Ukraine was planned for and reasonably measured, he said, whereas stocks in the Middle East have been unexpectedly and quickly drained, exposing supply chain constraints.

The U.S. military in Europe also is grappling with critical shortages of the Army Tactical Missile System, or ATACMS, a medium-range ballistic missile designed to strike behind enemy lines, the two officials said. But the overall munitions picture in Europe is less dire than on air defenses alone because some European militaries have their own offensive missiles, such as the Taurus and Storm Shadow, which are both long-range air-launched bunker-busting missiles.

Europe has few alternatives while stocks are low

The dearth of Patriot interceptors in Europe would leave few alternatives for shooting down Russia's more advanced ballistic missiles, which can be combined with swarms of inexpensive drones to overwhelm defenses, experts say.

Ukraine and some allies already use systems that can destroy slower-moving drones without expensive missiles. But ballistic missiles are a challenge because they dive steeply toward targets at more than five times the speed of sound, leaving little time to stop them.

The Patriot system tracks the missile, predicts its path and launches within minutes, all while carrying out complex calculations to ensure the interceptor finds its target. One Patriot battery can only cover a limited area: for example, a small military base but not a whole city.

One alternative could be France and Italy's SAMP/T NG air defense system. France has promised to speed up the delivery of the system — the upgraded version of the current SAMP/T — to Ukraine, which the manufacturer says is better able to counter ballistics.

The new iteration, however, has not yet been battle tested and the current version of the SAMP/T has a smaller range than the Patriot.

While U.S. and European militaries have warships that can serve as mobile air defense, they may be too far from a target to protect it and could risk getting sunk.

Patriot stocks have plunged during the Iran war

Ukraine has received Patriots from American and European stockpiles since Russia's 2022 invasion, with the U.S. providing about 600 of the interceptors during the Biden administration, said Mark Cancian, a retired Marine colonel who is now senior adviser at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a

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Washington think tank.

But the greatest expenditure has been during the Iran conflict, which has used up 65% of U.S. Patriots, amounting to roughly 1,500 of the nation's 2,330 interceptors, CSIS says. About 600 missiles, including those destined for Europe, should be made this year, with a production goal of 2,000 Patriot missiles a year set for 2030, Cancian said.

NATO says Europe's first Patriot missile production facility is expected to open in Germany in September, with deliveries possibly beginning early next year. The first deliveries should go to countries that have already placed orders, including Germany, the Netherlands, Romania and Spain, the U.S. defense official said.

But for now, that means some countries, such as Germany, have bought expensive Patriot systems but are in the "ridiculous" position of not having any ammunition to fire from them, said Arnold of the London think tank.

Germany's defense ministry said it does not comment on stockpiles.

Russia also has limitations

Moscow likely cannot carry out a sustained air assault on a NATO target while it launches almost nightly attacks on Ukraine, Arnold said.

Ukraine's recent strikes into Russia also have exposed weaknesses in Russia's air defenses, which could prompt Putin to think twice about provoking a retaliatory attack.

"The uncomfortable truth is possibly the best air defense that we have is Russian constraints," Arnold said.

Nepal floods highlight growing glacier risks in warming Himalayas

By SIBI ARASU Associated Press

BENGALURU, India (AP) — The deadly flash flood in Nepal on Wednesday was likely caused by a huge chunk of a glacier that broke off and temporarily dammed a river, according to preliminary investigations by scientists. That may have led to the backed-up water surging downstream with enormous force a few hours later, they suggested.

Scientists are still piecing together information from satellite and ground-level data to figure out exactly what happened to cause the flood, which killed hundreds and left many more missing, including foreigners and pilgrims.

The U.S. Geological Survey on Wednesday reported a magnitude 5.2 glacier collapse that sent debris flowing downstream with catastrophic impact on communities. It said its determination was based on data from nearby seismic stations, long period seismic waves and satellite imagery.

"A lower part of a glacier has really come off," said Jakob Steiner, a geoscientist at the University of Graz in Austria who is currently based in Bangladesh. "If you look at the imagery it's like someone cut with a huge knife through the whole lower part and it fell off."

Steiner said a mass of glacial ice dropping from a great height could have felt like a bomb exploding, resulting in the chaos that followed.

Scientists said it is too early to draw a direct connection between global warming and Wednesday's catastrophe. However, they said that as Earth's temperature rises because of human activities such as burning oil, gas and coal, the chances of such disasters increase, especially in the Himalayan mountains, which are warming considerably faster than many other parts of the world.

"We have to be cautious and not draw a connection yet. However, rising temperatures are changing the Hindu Kush Himalaya region and melting glaciers," said Saswat Sanyal, a disaster risk reduction specialist at the Kathmandu-based climate research group International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development.

Hundreds have lost their homes across the Himalayan region, and officials reported large-scale damage to critical infrastructure, including hydropower dams, roads, buildings and bridges in the region.

Sudden rise in water levels gave no chance to escape

Water levels in rivers across the flood-affected region rose by as much as 9 meters (29.5 feet) in 30 minutes as a result of the surge from the glacial detachment upstream, researchers at the Kathmandu-based climate research group said.

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"It was a huge rise, a huge surge of water that happened suddenly," said Sanyal.

Preliminary evidence suggests a large volume of ice and rock may have plunged into the Lhende Khola, a tributary of the Bhote Koshi River. Researchers said the collapse could have displaced water and picked up loose sediment and boulders, producing a powerful surge downstream. Researchers are also examining whether debris temporarily dammed the river before the impounded water burst through, magnifying the flood.

Steiner said the area has a history of destructive mountain hazards. Floods originating from a glacial lake struck the same valley in 2025, while an ice and rock avalanche occurred elsewhere in the area in 2024. The broader Langtang region was also hit by devastating avalanches during Nepal's 2015 earthquake.

Climate change increasing risks in the Himalayas

The Hindu Kush Himalaya is warming rapidly, driving major changes in glaciers, snow cover, permafrost and mountain slopes, according to climate scientists.

The mountains contain the largest volume of snow and ice outside the polar regions. More than 63,000 glaciers in the area feed at least 10 major Asian river systems and support the food, water, energy and livelihood security of billions of people.

However, around 78% of the glacier area, located between 4,500 and 6,000 meters above sea level, is highly exposed to warming.

"What happened yesterday is unfortunately the new normal. It's going to get worse from here onwards," Steiner said.

The last decade was the hottest multi-year period globally since records began, and 2024 was the warmest year ever recorded. United Nations reports have found that between 2000 and 2019, glaciers lost 267 gigatons of ice per year, roughly equivalent to the mass of 46,500 Great Pyramids of Giza.

In a warming world, the reports project the loss of up to 50% of all glaciers — excluding those in Greenland and Antarctica — by 2100, even if global warming can be limited to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit).

Current global policies put Earth on a trajectory to warm by about 2.8 degrees Celsius (5 degrees Fahrenheit) above preindustrial levels by the end of the century.

Research by the Kathmandu-based group has found that glaciers across these mountains are melting at an accelerating rate, with ice-loss rates doubling since 2000.

Melting glaciers can feed and enlarge glacial lakes, increasing the potential for sudden floods.

As glaciers retreat, mountain rock that was previously insulated and supported by ice becomes exposed to warmer temperatures, rain and repeated freezing and thawing. Permafrost — ground that has remained frozen for years — can also thaw, weakening rock faces and slopes.

"The chances that material starts to move down from mountains increase," Steiner said.

Sanyal said that may be the kind of cascading hazard behind what happened Wednesday in Nepal: An avalanche or glacier collapse that turns into a debris flow, river blockage and devastating flash flood.

Fast growth and lack of warnings compound disaster

Steiner said about 10% of Nepal's power production was located in the valley affected by the latest disaster. He said the repeated losses raise questions about whether enough has been done to install warning systems for residents and visitors alike after previous floods and avalanches.

The country's landscape has long been a draw for tourists, with more than a million people visiting the country annually in recent years.

Scientists say stronger early warning systems, better monitoring and faster cross-border information sharing will be increasingly important as temperatures rise and mountain landscapes become less stable.

But monitoring thousands of glaciers, steep slopes and river valleys across the Himalayan arc is extremely difficult.

And when cascading disasters begin, there may be only minutes to act.

"We don't have hours," Sanyal said. "We have sometimes a few minutes to actually prepare."

Steiner said a "red line" has already been reached where some regions of Nepal are just too risky to live in now.

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"We expected previous similar disasters to be a wake-up call for governments in the Himalayan region, but it's a bit frustrating that the damages never seem to be horrible enough," Steiner said.

"I'm not super optimistic that from tomorrow onwards there will be clear solutions," he added. "We know what can be done, but various stakeholders need to coordinate and make things happen."

US goals have shifted after 6 months of Iran war. The Strait of Hormuz is now a top concern

By MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — When President Donald Trump launched the war with Iran in late February, he initially forecast it would last four weeks to five weeks. Six months later, there still is no off-ramp in sight despite Trump's repeated assertions that the war has been won or a deal to resolve it was nearly complete.

A June memorandum of understanding was designed to pave the way to end the war but has fallen by the wayside. U.S. stockpiles of key weapons have diminished and the Republican administration has pivoted to pressuring Iran economically rather than conducting more strikes.

"No negotiations are happening right now, and this will continue until the president feels that maybe they come to the table in a meaningful way," White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt told "Fox & Friends" on Thursday.

As the shape of the war has morphed over the past half year, so, too, have the goals.

One of the prime goals now — reopening the Strait of Hormuz — was not one of Trump's original objectives. The waterway, which had been a vital shipping lane through which about 20% of the world's oil passed, was open and free to all.

Iran seized on it as a chokepoint for the global economy. The strait has been largely closed since the war started, driving up prices for fuel and fertilizer needed for farms and creating economic and political pressure in the U.S.

The U.S. has had tactical success with its goals to degrade Iran's military capabilities. But some of the other key objectives Trump laid out at the start of the conflict remain unfulfilled and others have shifted.

Here is a look at the objectives and what we know about where they stand:

Stop Iran from having a nuclear weapon

In June 2025, Trump declared that the U.S. had "obliterated" Iran's nuclear program. But when the war started, his aides justified the strikes by warning that Iran had been just weeks away from developing a bomb.

One of the most pressing questions has been what will be done with a stockpile of about 970 pounds (440 kilograms) of enriched uranium that Tehran could potentially use for a weapon. The material is believed to be buried under three sites bombed by the U.S. and Israel last year. Trump said in a May 29 social media post that it would be retrieved by the U.S. "in close coordination and conjunction with the Islamic Republic of Iran, plus the International Atomic Energy Agency, and DESTROYED."

Iran has not said whether it would consent. Without permission from Iran, experts have said seizing it would be a dangerous mission requiring a sizable deployment of U.S. troops into the country.

Officials said that Tehran reaffirmed in the June memorandum of understanding that it would not procure or develop nuclear weapons. The deal called for Iran to dilute its stockpile of highly enriched uranium. But many other details about Iran's program were left for future negotiations, and it's unclear how much progress, if any, was made before talks quickly fell off.

Reopen the Strait of Hormuz

Trump has said that a proposed deal with Iran would include the reopening of the strait and the U.S. ending its blockade of Tehran's ports, but at other times he has suggested the international waterway would somehow become American territory and indicated the U.S. could impose a toll on passing ships.

Trump also has repeatedly said that the strait is open, including during an interview on Wednesday on conservative commentator Glenn Beck's radio show.

"It's a functioning strait. Yes, every once in a while, there'll be a drone or a rocket or something shot,

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but it is a very functioning strait," Trump said.

Destroy Iran's ability to fire missiles

One of the prime objectives laid out by the administration was to "destroy their missiles and raze their missile industry to the ground."

Trump said in late March that Iran's missiles "are mostly decimated" and that 90% of their missiles and launchers were knocked out.

By mid-May, that shifted to a more conservative estimate, with the president saying that 82% of Iran's missiles were gone.

Iran has shown its ability to still launch attacks in the region, including drone strikes on ships sailing through the strait.

As recently as July, the U.S. military still had Iranian military targets to strike, with its Central Command announcing it was striking "Iranian military command centers, air defense and coastal surveillance sites, maritime capabilities, missile and drone launch sites and communications networks."

Destroy Iran's defense industrial base

Early in the war, the president and his administration sometimes listed this as a standalone objective. Other times, it has fallen off their list.

U.S. Central Command has said its targets for strikes in Iran have included weapons production and missile and drone manufacturing facilities.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio told lawmakers in early June that Iran has had "massive destruction" of its defense industrial base and "80 to 90% of attrition. It will take years for them to rebuild it."

Eliminate Iran's navy and air force

The U.S. and Israel quickly established air superiority in the skies above Iran, where they flew largely unchallenged.

Rubio told lawmakers that Iran still has drone capabilities, but it lacks the ability to use swarms of drones to attack targets, as it did at the start of the war. He also said Iran does not have a navy anymore, and relies on small craft outfitted with machine guns that harass ships and sometimes drop mines in the water.

Trump on Wednesday said that Iran's navy and air force are "totally gone."

Protect America's Middle Eastern allies

Trump, in a March social media post, added another objective for the U.S.: "Protecting, at the highest level, our Middle Eastern Allies, including Israel, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Kuwait, and others."

The U.S. maintains thousands of troops on bases and other installations in the region, but Trump has been unclear on how far he would be willing to go to protect Middle East allies from threats in the long term. In June, when the U.S. said Iran fired missiles at Kuwait and Bahrain, the U.S. launched strikes on Iran in response.

But one ally — Oman — has notably not been feeling the warmth of Trump's offer of protection, and instead has grappled with Trump's wrath over the deal it was negotiating with Iran over the Strait of Hormuz. In mid-August, he threatened in an interview that the U.S. would bomb Oman if it "gets in the way," using an expletive for emphasis.

Cut off support for Iranian proxy groups

In March, Trump and his administration repeatedly said degrading Iran's proxy terrorist networks was a key goal.

As time has gone on, administration officials have offered fewer updates about this objective, which the president described as ensuring that "the region's terrorist proxies can no longer destabilize the region or the world and attack our forces" and "ensuring that the Iranian regime cannot continue to arm, fund, and direct terrorist armies outside of their borders."

Early on, the U.S. struck Iranian-aligned militia groups in Iraq. But the biggest focus has been Israel's war in Lebanon against Hezbollah, which Iran backs. Iran has insisted that the fighting in Lebanon must be stopped as part of any deal with the U.S. Israel and the Lebanese government announced a deal, which was mediated by the U.S., for Israeli forces to leave southern Lebanon in exchange for Hezbollah's

disarmament — something an administration official described as a “huge step,” speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to address the issue on the record. But the militant group has refused direct talks and its leader has said it will not disarm.

Vigil held in Pakistan for 14 newborns as investigators probe cause of fatal hospital fire

By MUNIR AHMED and MUHAMMAD YOUSAF Associated Press

ISLAMABAD (AP) — A candlelight vigil was held on Thursday at the scene of a devastating hospital fire in Pakistan which killed 14 newborn babies, as investigators appointed by the prime minister arrived at the site to determine the cause of the blaze.

The government is facing pressure from grieving families and the public who are seeking answers about the cause of the fire and the safety measures at a major health facility.

The scene at the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences in Islamabad was somber as doctors, staff, patients and relatives gathered to mourn the newborns. Access was restricted to the third-floor area where the fire occurred.

During the vigil, members of civil society groups sat on the hospital floor beside rows of flickering candles, their grief and anger reflected in brightly colored, handwritten placards. “Investigators, no more graves for our babies,” one read. A woman fought back tears as some participants chanted, “We want justice,” and demanded accountability. The police did not intervene, and the demonstrators later dispersed peacefully.

The fire early on Wednesday at the hospital was confined to a third-floor nursery and did not affect the rest of the building. Hospital officials said the blaze spread so quickly that two doctors, two nurses and other staff present were able to rescue only one baby from among the 15 in the nursery.

Witnesses, including relatives of other patients, said they saw the family of the only baby to survive the fire leave the hospital with him after the blaze broke out.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has appointed an investigating committee, led by retired federal secretary Shahid Khan. It is expected to take statements from hospital staff, witnesses and families. The committee is also expected to make urgent recommendations to Sharif within 48 hours and deliver a comprehensive report within five days.

Hospital and district officials initially said an exploding air-conditioning unit caused the fire. In its preliminary report, however, the hospital said a blast involving a nebulizer sparked the blaze, which spread within minutes because of the high concentration of oxygen in the nursery. The committee has not reached its own conclusion and will independently determine the cause, the city administration said.

Officials said authorities handed over the bodies of all 14 newborns to their families for burial Wednesday night. Witnesses saw the families leaving the hospital with them in ambulances which were arranged by the government.

The Pakistani Taliban, a militant group also known as Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, or TTP, expressed grief over the newborns’ deaths and offered condolences to their families. The group has been behind numerous deadly attacks on security forces and civilians across the country in recent years.

The deaths prompted authorities to order broader reviews of fire-safety measures and firefighting equipment at hospitals. In Punjab, Pakistan’s most populous province, the government instructed the Health Department to immediately review fire-safety systems and emergency-response facilities, according to a government statement.

Sharif dismissed Health Secretary Aslam Ghauri, the Health Ministry’s highest-ranking civil servant, after the fire. Grieving parents and members of civil society have demanded answers about how the fire began and whether the nursery had adequate firefighting equipment.

The U.N. children’s agency, UNICEF, said it was saddened by the deaths and called for an urgent review and strengthening of fire-prevention and safety standards at health facilities.

The fire was among Pakistan’s deadliest recent tragedies involving children. In June, 14 schoolchildren were killed when the roof of a tutoring center under construction collapsed in the eastern city of Lahore.

Britons get the chance to read Jason Arday's story for themselves as memoir is published in the UK

By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Britons who saw Professor Jason Arday's life and death dissected by weeks of headlines covering allegations about his academic qualifications and personal accomplishments can now read his version of the story.

Simon & Schuster will on Thursday publish Arday's memoir "Great and Unfortunate Things," which tells the story of how an autistic boy who was non-verbal as a child and illiterate until his late teens grew up to be the youngest Black professor in the history of Cambridge University.

The book's release comes less than two weeks after Arday, 41, was found dead at his apartment in London following relentless media coverage about allegations that his academic work was bolstered by plagiarism and that he exaggerated his athletic and fundraising achievements. The memoir was published earlier this month in the U.S.

Simon & Schuster said it decided to publish the book in accordance with his family's wishes. The publisher said it would have no further comment about the book at this time.

"To the very end, Jason was clear that he wanted his memoir to be published, and it is only right that we honor his wishes," the family said in a statement released by Simon & Schuster.

"There has been so much that has been written and said about our beloved brother, son, father, partner and uncle, mostly by people who don't know the truth of what he experienced, and we experienced as a family, or what an extraordinary person he was."

Arday's death on Aug. 14 has sparked recriminations over who was responsible.

Cambridge has been criticized for elevating Arday too quickly in a rush to promote diversity, despite red flags about his qualifications. The news media has been targeted for driving the professor to despair with a barrage of coverage that his supporters say was out of proportion to what a white scholar charged with similar mistakes would have faced.

Scrutiny of the memoir increased following the controversy, with British newspapers noting that some of the running and fundraising accomplishments he previously touted had been left out of the book. For example, an advance copy of the book doesn't mention his claim that he once ran 600 miles in six days to raise money for charity.

In an interview with the Times of London that was published July 31, Arday acknowledged that he had made mistakes, which he attributed to his autism and a lack of oversight early in his career. But he rejected accusations that he was "a liar and a fantasist and an academic fraud," saying they were motivated by "racism and ableism."

Arday, a sociologist, first rose to prominence when Cambridge announced his appointment in 2023, saying he was a "respected scholar" whose work focused on increasing the number of people from minority ethnic backgrounds who pursued higher education.

Questions about his academic qualifications began attracting public attention in mid-July after British newspapers picked up plagiarism allegations published by a white researcher who has been critical of "diversity, equity and inclusion programs."

Cambridge initially stood by Arday, saying the plagiarism allegations had been investigated and determined to be unfounded. But on Aug. 5, the university announced that it had opened an investigation into Arday's appointment after receiving "new information" about his qualifications and honorary appointments.

News coverage of Arday's story didn't stop, and he died nine days later.

"We are happy to allow the book to speak for itself and won't comment further on its content," the family said in their statement. "The family is still in shock and we are grieving. We call upon the media to give the family the space it needs to come to terms with this terrible loss."

Republicans face a midterm verdict as Iran war drags on months longer than Trump promised

By MIKE CATALINI and STEVEN SLOAN Associated Press

BETHLEHEM, Pa. (AP) — Mike Gibbons sat out the presidential election two years ago, frustrated that Democrat Kamala Harris did not take a stronger stand against Israel's war in Gaza and unable to bring himself to cast a vote for Republican Donald Trump.

That is not his plan this year.

The 33-year-old restaurant server in this eastern Pennsylvania town that once housed one of the world's largest steelmakers is eager to vote for any Democrat he can in November. As the war with Iran that Trump initially said would last weeks surpasses six months on Friday, Gibbons is feeling the fallout every time he fills his tank at nearly \$1 per gallon more than last year.

"The price of gas affects the price of everything and the price of everything's up and my pay hasn't gone up," he said. "I'm doing blue no matter who this time."

The Iran war has reshaped the rapidly approaching midterm elections, undermining Trump's campaign pledge to steer clear of foreign conflicts and challenging Republicans who would rather focus on their tax cuts as they cling to narrow majorities in Congress.

While the president's supporters are undeterred, the war's unpopularity and economic ripple effects could tilt the scales in tightly contested U.S. House districts like the one in Bethlehem, where Republican Rep. Ryan Mackenzie is one of this year's most vulnerable incumbents.

Midterm elections are always difficult for the party in power in Washington. But interviews with voters around the country show how a war that Trump expected to end with a swift victory could undermine the final years of his presidency.

Many US adults say the war has not been worth fighting

About two-thirds of U.S. adults say the war with Iran has not been worth fighting, according to a July poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. That includes the vast majority of Democrats and independents, as well as more than one-third of Republicans.

Although Trump has long criticized Iran's leadership, he did little to prepare Americans or allies for such a lengthy conflict. Republican President George W. Bush, for instance, spent more than a year making a case for launching a war in Iraq through speeches and attempts to build an international coalition. Trump did none of that.

Trump has refused to acknowledge the war's cost, saying this month he would "never apologize" for higher prices stemming from it and insisting he did "the right thing" to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. His administration announced new sanctions this week in an attempt to further isolate Tehran.

In Congress, Republicans have shifted from initially cheerleading Trump's moves in Iran to expressing concern about the toll of the war. But the party has largely unified to block measures that would curb Trump's war powers and leaders have shown no interest in cutting off money for the war, preferring to portray Democrats as extremists who cannot be trusted to govern.

Democrats who were blamed just two years ago for presiding over high prices see an opportunity to turn the issue back on their opponents. As part of his comeback U.S. Senate bid in Ohio, Sherrod Brown released an ad this week filmed at a gas station as he said "the cost of gas is out of control and we're the ones paying for it."

Speaking to a group of older adults recently in a Republican-dominated swath of western Maryland, Democratic U.S. Sen. Angela Alsobrooks blamed higher prices on the war. Heading into November, she encouraged fellow Democrats to stay focused on the war's impact and what it says about Trump's leadership.

"We ought to be saying what is obvious, which is our country is heading in the wrong direction," she said in an interview.

That resonates with voters such as Brandon Bane, a fast-food worker in Bakersfield, California, where Republican Rep. David Valadao is also in a competitive congressional race. Bane, who described himself as a political independent, said he often has to balance paying rent and groceries, noting high gas prices have only added to the challenge.

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"It hasn't been worth it at all," he said of the war, adding that he plans to vote for Valadao's challenger, Democrat Randy Villegas.

Melissa Wegman, a Democratic retiree who is also from Bakersfield, said she was shocked when the pump recently whirled to \$128 to fill the tank on her SUV.

"I have to manage a budget," she said.

Some voters are sticking with Republicans

But there is a risk, too, that the war does not provide Democrats with the political boost they are expecting.

While there is plenty of frustration about prices, there are also voters willing to make adjustments without blaming Republicans. Many remain aligned with Trump and are not interested in seeing Democrats return to power.

North Carolina is a top pickup opportunity for Democrats hoping to flip a U.S. Senate seat. But at the State Farmers Market in Raleigh, North Carolina, Lucinda Lowe of Sugarloaf Orchards said her faith in Trump is solid.

"There has to be a reason why they're over there," she said. "They wouldn't be over there doing that if there wasn't something more going on than what we're seeing."

She has not raised her prices on apples even as fuel and fertilizer costs soar. Her family has been farming since 1846 so she feels resilient to weather the next rough patch and tells others to do the same.

"Suck it up, buttercup," she said.

Similarly in Iowa, where Democrats are bullish on their prospects of flipping everything from a U.S. Senate seat and the governor's mansion to several U.S. House races, Larry Cole said higher gas prices as a result of the war are just the "nature of the beast."

The 66-year-old Republican service manager from Perry, Iowa, said he will back Republicans in this midterm elections and does not want to see Democrats gain control in either chamber. He said Trump has taken action that other presidents were not willing to do to keep Iran in check.

Trump "hit them where they need to be hit," Cole said.

Mark Duffy, 65, of Scottsdale, Arizona, said he did not expect the Iran war to go on as long as it has, but it has not had material effects on his life.

"I didn't think it would go this long," said Duffy, who retired a year ago from his career selling electronic components. "I don't think anybody did, but now the next wave is the economic sanctions, so we'll see if that works and maybe that is a way for other people to join."

For others, the war has only reinforced a sense that neither political party is responsive to the needs of voters.

As he left a tattoo parlor in Ashland, Virginia, 26-year-old Evan Mise said he feels the increase in gas prices and worries about whether his mom will be able to retire or whether he will someday be able to.

But he had not decided whether to support Democrats or Republicans in November.

"I feel like our government is pretty corrupt through and through," he said. "It's kind of just a sit-back-and-watch thing. And I think my generation especially feels helpless."

Today in History: August 28, MLK delivers 'I Have a Dream' speech

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Friday, Aug. 28, the 240th day of 2026. There are 125 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Aug. 28, 1963, during the March on Washington, the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech before an estimated 250,000 people in front of the Lincoln Memorial.

Also on this date:

In 1845, the first issue of Scientific American magazine was published; it remains the oldest continuously published magazine in the United States.

In 1862, the Second Battle of Bull Run began in Prince William County, Virginia, during the Civil War; the Union army retreated two days later after suffering 14,000 casualties.

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In 1898, pharmacist Caleb Bradham of New Bern, North Carolina, changed the name of the carbonated beverage he'd created five years earlier from "Brad's Drink" to "Pepsi-Cola."

In 1955, Emmett Till, a Black teenager from Chicago, was abducted from his uncle's home in Mississippi by two white men after he had allegedly whistled at a white woman four days earlier; he was found dead three days later.

In 1957, U.S. Sen. Strom Thurmond of South Carolina notched the longest speaking filibuster in Senate history (24 hours and 18 minutes), seeking to stall passage of the Civil Rights Act. (Democratic U.S. Sen. Cory Booker of New Jersey delivered the longest continuous Senate floor speech from March 31 to April 1, 2025, speaking 25 hours and 5 minutes against President Donald Trump.)

In 1968, police and anti-war demonstrators clashed in the streets of Chicago as the Democratic National Convention nominated Hubert H. Humphrey for president.

In 1988, 70 people were killed when three Italian Air Force stunt planes collided during an air show at the U.S. air base in Ramstein, West Germany.

In 2005, New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin ordered a mandatory evacuation as Hurricane Katrina approached the city.

In 2013, a military jury sentenced Army Maj. Nidal Hasan to death for a 2009 shooting rampage at Fort Hood that claimed 13 lives and left 30 people injured.

In 2016, six scientists completed a yearlong Mars simulation on the Big Island of Hawaii, where they emerged after living in a dome in near isolation on Mauna Loa.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Ken Jenkins (TV: "Scrubs") is 86. Former MLB manager and player Lou Piniella is 83. Former MLB pitcher Ron Guidry is 76. Former U.S. Poet Laureate Rita Dove is 74. Artist Ai Weiwei is 69. Actor Daniel Stern is 69. Olympic gold medal figure skater Scott Hamilton is 68. Actor Jennifer Coolidge is 65. Film director David Fincher is 64. Country singer Shania Twain is 61. "Pokemon" creator Satoshi Tajiri is 61. Actor Billy Boyd is 58. Actor Jack Black is 57. Hockey Hall of Famer Pierre Turgeon is 57. Actor Jason Priestley is 57. Olympic gold medal swimmer Janet Evans is 55. Actor Carly Pope is 45. Country singer Jake Owen is 45. Country singer LeAnn Rimes is 44. Rock singer Florence Welch (Florence and the Machine) is 40. Actor Quvenzhané (kwuh-VEHN'-zhah-nay) Wallis is 23.